THE EXPECTED CHURCH

M. S. RICE

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DUST AND DESTINY

The Expected Church

TWELVE SERMONS

By

M. S. RICE

M. S. Rice.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

—PAUL

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To

THE CONGREGATION

OF THE

METROPOLITAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

TO WHOM THESE SERMONS WERE DELIVERED, AND WHOSE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE CHURCH HAS BEEN UNFALTERINGLY SUPPORTED BY THEIR SACRIFICIAL ESPOUSAL OF THE CHURCH'S GREAT TASK, THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

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FOREWORD

THERE is so much in a sermon that is not said, and hence which cannot accompany the printed page that essays to bear a sermon away from the platform of its actual delivery, to the eyes of readers who must read only the words that are printed, that the preacher cannot but feel great concern whenever he dares risk his sermon to the rigid judgment of cold type.

These twelve sermons were delivered, not in a series, but in the ordinary course of the preacher's pulpit efforts. They were designed to present the ever-changing appeal of the church that we love to those who love it, in order that its call might not only be heard, but heeded in the passion for its great work. Such consecration can only justify itself in the conduct, in these commanding days, of those who have espoused the cause of Him whose we are and whom we serve.

M. S. R.

METROPOLITAN CHURCH,
DETROIT, 1922.

I

THE EXPECTED CHURCH

"Sir, we would see Jesus."—John 12. 21.

THE phrase "The Expected Church," which I use to title this sermon, was the caption of an unusually interesting and thought-creating editorial in one of the religious journals of our country some time since. It was based upon, and doubtless prompted by, a remark the editor heard from the lips of a prominent attorney in one of our larger cities. Some men seated at a club were engaged in discussion of the common matters of interest in the day's thought and business, and of course, brought themselves square up to the problem of what could be done to change things that were into things that should be. The lawyer finally declared, as the discussion of that particular day was breaking up, that there was profound significance in the fact that before every problematic situation that arises to-day there seems to be a general conviction that the church should do something about it. He said, "Gentlemen, we seem to close every discussion we have, upon whatsoever problem we consider, with the same question, 'What is

the church going to do about it?" " That was the remark that caught the editor's attention, and he went away profoundly impressed with the great meaning of such a fact and the sure judgment such a fact presents before the church to-day. The world has come to expect from the church a sure leadership in every great movement among men that makes for progress in everything of righteousness. The gist of the editorial was something like this: "It is a terrific thing for the church to be expected. Its duty is serious enough when it is thrusting itself upon a world that does not want it. But when the world is wanting it, and waiting for it, and actually expecting it, then the responsibility should make the church quake. If it fails then, it squanders opportunity, and trades an offered respect for an earned contempt. It not only disappoints God but it likewise betrays humanity. The reward for what the church already has done is this: it is expected to do more." All that may not be just the way the editorial was phrased, but the argument is there, and to my mind it has proven one of the most searching ideas to reveal present-day duties, that has ever been handed to me; and with it now I propose a frank discussion of what I am convinced is the most complimentary fact that has yet been paid to the churches' position in the world.

We are now the most expected institution on

earth. And these are hard days, brim full of call to daring, that runs straight into genuine sacrifice on every hand. It may seem trite and commonplace now to say there never was a day so significant in judgment as this. Every generation, I presume, has said it. In a way there never has been a more important period in the world than the one that is always on hand; for if it is not doing things that shake the centuries, it is making vital way to the day that will do them. But enough has been shaken before us and about us all now, to startle even the dullest of us to the conviction that we are living in the very midst of a whole-world crisis. And in the day when falterings of men's plans and hopes have made criticism easy and bitter against every institution that has carried any professions of help, we have heard often that Christianity has failed, and men have imagined they were making ready her sepulcher again. But just now, with the smoke of conflict lifting a bit from the low places of the struggle, and just as the staggering world is once more catching step for its compelled journey onward, we are seeing as we never have seen it before, and we are hearing as we have never heard it before, that the Church of Jesus Christ must take measure now before expectation.

In the days when we have had to struggle and wait for mere recognition in the world, when

we have had to pay the price of genuine heroics merely to gain standing-room, there could be but small responsibility upon us for the conditions amid which we had mere foot-room. The history of the church thus far has been largely a fight for toleration. We have been fascinated in the stories of the martyrs and pioneers and missionaries who have pushed out into the very ends of the world to pre-empt a place. But an expectant world now has become a divine challenge. The world is worn out from its long and unsuccessful struggle with evil, which very struggle it has made because men saw what evil meant in the light of the message we preach. It turns now to the church and expectantly awaits from it a leadership compatible with its claims. I believe this is the very greatest compliment that has yet been won by Christianity.

He must indeed be a dull reader of modern progress who has followed the history men have been making in philanthropy and reforms, in industrial tendencies, and in political democracy, and failed to recognize that easily the chief accession of moral force which all these movements have received has come from the church. Things which only a short-gone yesterday were undertaken only as church philanthropy and benevolence, have now become accepted appeals for public taxes, and found place as activities of the state. I am sure this is the reason for much of

the popular expectation now upon us. The church has wholly changed its attitude toward the world, or, much better might I say, the world has discovered its new rights in the church. It is no longer a mere refuge from the world, but rather it is a training place for the world. The story of real navigation cannot be written around the sheltered shores of a harbor of refuge. I believe in such a harbor, but I believe likewise in the ship that can advance through the storm. There is to me something infinitely more inspiring to be told that I can be endowed with a strength great enough to meet and fight out a storm than to be told where I can go for shelter. I believe it is in one of Doctor Peabody's books that I found this sentence, and I have carried it much just to refresh my soul to service: "The evidence of Christian discipleship is not ecclesiastical nor doctrinal. It is ethical, social, political, industrial, human. The Christian religion does not occupy a separated, even though it be an elevated plateau of life, but it descends like a fertilizing stream to the world, needy below." With that must go likewise the full liability it implies. I stood once with a company of people through a long tragedy which was enacted before our helpless eyes, and which hurled condemnation upon our weak hands for hours and hours. The leaping mad sea was crashing ships on many shores. Several we had seen come limping into harbor,

and reports were coming fast of many that were lost, as the storm increased and raged for three days and nights. We saw the Mataafa trying for harbor, and unable to make it. She was crashed against the rocks and broken to pieces before our helplessness. The waves were running higher than the ship's masts, and were lashed to terror by the sweeping blizzard. We walked the shore and condemned our weakness. We built fires when darkness fell, and carried fuel the whole night long that we might let the men know, if any be alive on that hard battered hull, that we were at least there. The men of the life crew were mercilessly criticized. The fury of the storm was no excuse. Their boat was hurled back at them when they sought to launch it, as though the sea did not mean to tolerate any meddling with its feast of fury. The life-line fell helpless in the waves, and was broken by the ice. But men would not accept all this as an excuse for the life crew. "What are life savers for," they insisted, "if not for times when storms rage? We didn't equip them for a calm! We rigged their station for storm. Anybody can take an old skiff and save men in a calm." Thus talked the men who, furious at their own impotency because they knew their fellow men were dying right before them, would not brook excuse from those whose business it was to save. They even said the crew should have sacrificed

themselves in the determined endeavor to do what they were called to do. I tried to defend them with the idea that it was certain death for the whole crew if they launched out there, and men answered me quickly, with these words, "How far short of death are life-savers supposed to stop?" That is exactly the spirit which flies to quick words about the church to-day. We are an expected church. It is the price we must pay for the high profession of divine relationship we have made. The Bible is written full of heroic phrases which cluster around the daring life necessary to be lived by those who take up the task of our religion. The calls sound like blasts of trumpets for battle. We who stand committed to the program of Christianity in this world must recognize that every element of the quietist has been driven from our conduct. The kingdom of heaven is for the strong hands that can take it. To him, and to him only, that overcometh and endureth to the end are promises made. The world is thoroughly justified in drawing all this squarely across us in judgment. Our Bible has in fact offered them the judgment already. The plan of our great conflict has been sternly written in virile phrases here. "Fight the fight"; "Run the straight race"; "Make straight His paths"; "Lay down your lives." We are an expected people. Ours is an expected church.

The church can point to no greater compliment that it has won from the world in all its history than this. Hard though it be for us to fully meet it, we are nevertheless duty bound as Christians to throw ourselves into the task before us, and, if need be, sacrifice to the extreme. In fact, the path leading to sacrifice is much more clearly defined than that leading to ease. We must be unfalteringly ready to stake our lives in loyalty. Our judgment is of life. Our mere age in the world is no basis for boasting. Because the church is old is no sure argument of its security. There are old falsehoods in the world. Age is no basis for pride for those who have hard work to do. There must be other confidence. Rauschenbusch has no keener word anywhere in all his many keen observations about religion than this: "No religion gains by the lapse of time; it only loses. Unless new storms pass over it and cleanse it, it will be stifled in its own dry foliage. Men seem so afraid of religious vagaries, and so little afraid of religious stagnation. Yet the religion of Jesus has much less to fear from sitting down to meat with publicans and sinners than from that graver danger shown and so often condemned by Jesus—the immaculate isolation of the Pharisees. The Church of Jesus Christ will take care of itself if mixed into the three measures of meal; but the fate of leaven that is kept to itself is to sour hopelessly.

If the church confines itself to theology and the Bible, and refuses its larger mission to humanity, its theology will gradually become mythology, and its Bible a closed book."

There can be no question in any open mind that reads intelligently the news of the world today, and meditates upon its wars and plans and quarrels, that this difficult day of ours is seriously afflicted with principles which are antagonistic to the fundamental principles of Christianity. There are many—and I am inclined to believe a growing number just now—who, on account of the difficulty thus indicated, declare it is so hard to lead a really Christian life that they will not try to do so. The church is bound to speak boldly in our day. We have always used the term "the world," meaning society at large, as an expression for evil, and have expressed the hope that some great victorious day this evil world will have to give place to the true human society in which the spirit of Christ will be supreme. For many foolish centuries those who imagined they were to live real holy lives knew no possible way to do so but to separate themselves from the world, and, hiding in the barren loneness of their own isolation, sought there to build up what they chose to call holiness. The monk deserted the evil world, but depended upon someone from the evil deserted world, to bring him his food. They showed me a

huge pillar in a far country once, on which, the guide declared with suppressed feeling, an old "pillar saint" had lived for thirty years. I asked what he was doing up there, and the guide told me he was being holy, and I went a bit farther with my same question, and said, "What if he was holy up there?" If I had been running the commissary I would have stopped the provisions from an unholy world being hoisted to a false idea of holiness there, just to see how soon that separated holiness would come down and help the rest of us. They took me to a desolate dungeon once and showed me where a so-called holy man of old had lived for many years in absolute seclusion of his own shut-in piety. After my guide had recited the hollow story, I troubled him a bit by asking, "What's the use of being holy in a hole anyhow?" What we want is holy men and women on the streets, in the markets, in society, everywhere where men and women have to live, and work, and achieve, and suffer, and die. Thank God the unholy principle of an isolated holiness has been shaken off our religion. The expecting world that has heard our claims has, in its appreciated need, crowded up, and broken down the walls of the monastery, and demanded service. Modern life withholds support from the religion that fulfills itself in idle seclusion, and with a rugged practical expectation of real vital results comes asking the church

to right the things that are wrong. Truth cannot be tolerant. It cannot be truth without an uncompromising stand. The church must change a wrong world. Righteousness cannot be tolerant of unrighteousness. Whenever it endeavors so to do it surrenders its holiness and its mission.

When I bring myself to look straight at the conditions of the life of our day; when I see with what eternal right the movement of the age to which I speak is burdened; when I lift my eyes to look upon the men and women to whom I am privileged to speak; and when I try, as I surely have many times tried, to calculate what results could be achieved if only the truth were presented so that it would compel acceptance, I can scarce endure indecision another hour. We, who have been charged with living in this the most difficult day perhaps the world has ever staggered through! We who must march straight now into problems of living and life that throb with all human destiny can mean! We who have dared take unto ourselves the responsibility of a declared faith in a Christ, whose words, if they mean anything, must mean everything! We who must be judged to-morrow by a generation that will have the right to the inheritance of everything our faithfulness to-day can bring to them! We must be Christians now. We must not hesitate to match our faith against all the difficulty the day knows. I know these are hard days.

But Jesus Christ never came to deliver mankind from the mere ennui of aimlessness. He came knowing we were in a storm, but knowing also that he was the master of wind and wave. I know too that your place individually is beset with great difficulty. But Jesus never sought folks to do his business who were cushioned on ease or lulled in the stupor of extravagance. I know that some of you have been, and are this very moment strugging hard over mere financial endeavor to hold on to your fortune. But I know too, that sometimes Jesus had to say to some who sought to follow him, that he could do the most with folks whose hands had been set free from the tyranny of their property. I know this: we have God, and whatever else we may lack we are thus expectantly equipped to get our lives lived unto tangible results. The fields are ripe, dead ripe. Trouble is in the social world. Ennui is in our literature. Disquiet and unrest are sweeping our business world. Nations are in turmoil. Governments that only a very short gone yesterday were basking in a careless confidence that their foundations were secure, are to-day toppled in wreck. Revolution is running down human ranks with easy contagion. These are indeed days to try men's souls. Strenuous days! But, after all, I confess I would much rather die, wracked to death by the torture of broken health that broke under too heavy a

load, than to sleep my life away under the false influence of the dangerous anæsthetic of dawdling ease. O men and women of this big accessible world to-day, that looks eagerly every-whither for help and deliverance from its sorrows, I salute you, and congratulate you on your responsibility. Men and women of the Christian Church, you over whose lives have been pronounced the sacred vows of the great God-raised institution that was established and equipped to match the resources of heaven against the ravages of hell, I congratulate you this day upon the eager expectation which the world has come now to have in you. You who possess trained personalities, the most vital asset any man can ever invest in the world's life, you cannot do more with your life than to bring it with the enthusiasm of entire consecration to bear upon this great transitional era of the world to help it into a more dynamic faith in Jesus Christ. The preemption which the expectant world has made on the church is the compelling call to the men and women of large vision in such an age as this, not to merely sit to enjoy their liberties and lavish ability upon themselves for ease, but rather to spend themselves and to be spent in the service of their fellows. My heart leaped to encouragement one night, at the close of an address I had made in a university. I saw coming toward me a great giant of a fellow, holding out

his big hand and saying, "Do you know me?" I was delighted to assure him that I did, for I am not real safe under such questioning. I had not seen him for fifteen years, but I could never forget that face, and I answered as I grabbed his hand, "What are you doing here, Charlie?" He said doggedly, and carrying to me vividly the memory of what he had come out of, "I am going to school." A good many years ago I saw that big young man converted one evening during a meeting I was holding in a little country church. He was sitting on the platform just at my feet, and too bashful to sit thus looking at an audience, he shielded his face in his hands, and sat listening. Suddenly, utterly unconscious of all others, he stood straight up, and turning said to me as his face beamed, "I see it," and then realizing what he had done, sank with a crash back to his humble seat on the floor. He was twenty-four years of age then, and a heroic fellow. His father had died when he was a mere lad, and left him with his widowed mother and four other children. They lived on a poor sort of a hillside farm, which was made doubly difficult by a heavy mortgage. Charlie was a stout lad, and had to bend all his strength to do the work of the farm, and never was privileged another day's schooling after his father's death. But he never complained. He devoted himself to the task, and worked that mortgage all away,

and in the course of the years built for his mother a nice new house, doing all the work with his own strong hands. The mother's health broke and she became the victim of a long lingering disease that seemed to feast itself on increasing the difficulty for the hero boy. But Charlie kept the income coming in so he could care for the added expenses, and finally with a long hospital bill added to it all, he made his devoted way to the last day on earth of his beloved mother, and sat beside her to comfort her as she went home to God. He buried her tenderly and placed above her a modest marker of his affection. He then felt that he was free to spend the remainder of his life as he might choose to do. He called the other children together and told them there was a certain amount of money in the bank, which was all theirs. The farm was free of all debt, and in good condition, and it was all theirs. He then announced that with only enough money in his pocket to pay his railroad fare to the university, he was going to begin his education. He was forty years of age. As I stood there holding his hand in the admiration which sprang from my remembrance of all this I have been telling you, he gripped my palm in his and said, "Mr. Rice, it will take me five years more to finish the college work I have laid out before me, but all I ask is a chance to bring my life up to the very best I can make it, and devote it to the service

of men for Christ's sake." Such a vision as that strong son of service had of the debt of life is what the world is expecting from the Christian Church to-day. We must become permeated, saturated with such devotion, and when it shall be so, the expectant world will be answered with the expected church. The unfaltering behavior of our Lord is forever drawn against us by the world, as the pattern announced in our Bible as the example for our conduct. The whole world knows Jesus Christ was brave. It has no toleration for cowardice in conduct of those who name his name and profess to follow him. Jesus Christ would forever and everywhere stand for the right. Therefore all hesitation and compromise and fear of those who do not want righteousness so earnestly as to be willing to pay the full price for it, bear no savor of those who follow his lead. The world knows that there is no hope for its redemption any other where than from those who with a fearlessness of self-sacrifice will take up the cross and actually follow Christ, and because of this conviction it expects the church. The Church of Christ is here on duty. There is no escape for us who expect to vindicate our espousal of it, save as we throw our lives into its task with all our might. We must either meet our obligation and establish the principle of our religion in the life of this world or quit and get

out of the way. The church cannot be a mere tolerated institution. There is no flavor of God in such an attitude. The incumbent obligation of our profession compels us to save the world. I would add this, therefore, as our accepted conviction which must overleap the expectation of the world in us; we are obligated by our creed, and by every pulse of the life expressive of our real truth, to the largest possible service, to the cleanest living, to the best for man and God. The church has full right in every one of its people, a right which must respond to an expectant world, but a right which is founded also on its own deep sense of obligation, to the reflection of the very best there is for mankind, which means love and heaven and God.

II

THE CHURCH OF MINIMUMS

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16. 24.

For long now there has been tolerated about the world an oft-indefinite but ever-persistent criticism of the Christian Church, a criticism which presumes upon the idea as axiomatic and never questions, that there is something radically wrong with the church. It has been an easy morsel to pick up and a very seemingly satisfactory one to roll under the tongue of those who would evade the claim of the church on them, or who would, in shielding their own condemnation, shuffle the blame for things as they are upon the shoulders of someone else. What's the matter with the church? Men ask it, and lift their waiting ears in a confidence that such a question will die away in its own echoes. The attitude has generated foolish criticism, as well as foolish defense, and likewise some wholesome criticism and some wholesome defense. I followed carefully one quite representative symposium on the general theme, wherein men from almost every branch of church activity

joined in the common endeavor to answer the question, which was thus made to admit that there was really something seriously wrong with the church. With but one exception the argument was made around the admission. That one exception argued that what we were alarmed over was the evidence of real life yet in the church, which was making heroic effort to adjust our activities and organizations to the new phases of the life of our new age. The very spirit of dissatisfaction at putting new wine in old bottles was full evidence, thought he, that we are with our Lord understanding the necessity of new bottles for the new wine of our new efforts. That kind of argument attracted me, and I thought his article was much the better article of the group, doubtless because of a fact we all appreciate, namely, that we admire the one who can say what we have always wished we could say, but had never just found the right words in which to frame it. I have never cared to train with the critics of the church. I love the church with all my heart, and I believe in it absolutely, and have a confidence in it which is founded upon my assurance that it is the Church of God. I rejoice in what the church has been and in what it is. I am encouraged when I read of what it has done and is doing. My heart leaps within me when I read the great program the church has had the courage to announce. I would not

be blind, nor do I believe I have been, to the evidences of the imperfections, nor to the places of repair which are necessary. I try always to discover the points of need, that it may be possible for even me, the least among her servants, to help God's church to the extent of my ability, to a better and a fuller victory. We are in our whole generation endangered from what Mr. Chesterton has called in one of his essays "the negative spirit." There are men and women whose proof of scholarship is only exposed in mere criticism. They have come forward to ask the question, "What is the matter with the church?" with such an inflection that it carries its own answer. In fact, the question of it has largely been dropped now, and it has come to be rather a bold manner of declaring that the church is well beyond repair; its task is undone, and can never hope to be done by the church. Men have surrounded the church, and with their implicating questions have demanded its surrender. It becomes us to look very carefully at much of the criticism of the church to-day, for it savors of blind destruction, and would not lead to correction of wrongs so much as it would to the destruction of our finest hopes. In Chesterton's introduction to his book *Heretics,* he tells of a great commotion which had arisen in the street over a lamp-post which some influential folks desired to tear down. During the discus-

sion, or, rather, clamor, which attended the endeavor, there came by a gray-clad monk who was asked for his opinion of the matter, and he answered in the arid manner of schoolmen: "Let us, first of all, my brethren, consider the real value of light. If light be in itself good"—and he got no further, for someone knocked him down at that point, and the crowd rushed upon the lamp-post and pulled it down, as they did so congratulating themselves on their genuine practicability. But when they began to analyze the many various reasons the crowd had for pulling down the lamp-post, they found themselves in a new and vigorous war in the night, no man knowing whom he struck in the dark; and the author declared that gradually but inevitably there came over that crowd the conviction that it did all depend on the philosophy of light, only what they might have discussed under the gas-lamp that may not have been perfect, but which gave some light, they now must discuss in the dark. That little introductory story of Chesterton's has long interested me. Let us make sure we know why they want to pull the lamp-post down. For the real thing the matter with the church to some may have utterly no more meaning than that its presence is a menace to their ways of doing business here on earth.

In all the discussions I have read or listened to on this quite common subject, the most sug-

gestive and vital one to me was a short editorial which made its appearance in one of our American religious journals some time since, under the title I have chosen for this sermon—"The Church of Minimums." The editor phrased, in that statement, the very thing I have been trying to phrase for long. We are suffering in the Church of Christ on earth to-day from the fatal habit of the minimum. We are fearful of our task. We have forever looked at our commission with the fearful eyes of the disciples when the multitude followed them away from the ordinary sources of supply, and, sure that they had no other resource, they begged the Master to send the crowd away. It has been often the experience of Christ with his church that he has been compelled to force the use of his own availability upon us, by feeding the impossible crowd with a boy's lunch. The habit of the minimum has cramped us. Individuals suffer under it. The church as a whole has allowed its story to be written in its smalling influence, if I may be allowed a word of my own make, to express it. The thraldom of this tendency to minimize our expressions in the world as Christians, stands to-day a serious affliction. I chafe under it. We would snatch from the world one of its chief objections to our whole work to-day, if we would but cut our patterns larger. Abraham went out not knowing whither he went, and one of the

very great goers of the human story answered him with a long, long echo across the ages when he declared a man never went so far nor so nobly as he did when he went not knowing whither he went. There is an old, very old story, that has been used so much for illustration that its illustration is about worn through, of the young artist Raphael, who in a crisis of his artistic career had one day stepped out of his studio and left some sketches on which he was working. Angelo came in, and picking up some sketching crayon hurriedly drew around each sketch a larger outline, and wrote under it all, *"Amplius."* The story goes, of course, that this was what really made Raphael. I don't know how true the story is, but I know it is a good, and that's the reason it is now a well-worn story. The principle contained seems to be the need of the day. We do not await Angelo's coming, but we do await the long too-small Raphael to recognize the larger sketch that has been drawn about his cramped endeavor. Here is the sketch long set before us, and surely it should blaze in daring proportions before the church to-day that stands faced with expectation in every need the world develops. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring

the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. . . . And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually. . . . And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." That sounds like *"amplius"* to me. It is from the clear, pointed pen of Isaiah. You cannot read it and fail to feel the enlargement set before us for greater things than we have even dared announce as our plans. We are straitened in our purposes. We are trying to run the church too much on the least possible basis. We are constantly accustomed to hearing all our plans discussed on the minimum. We are impoverished with an extravagant economy. I submit that it does not savor of the Church of God. We cannot expect to effectually represent a great God on a diminishing basis.

I propose now to make divisional use for this address in the points the editor made. He

touched a most essential matter before us, and one which I am sure has been at the heart of every preacher these days, when he said, We are suffering to-day from the minimum habit of belief. It seems to be the accepted fashion of our day to believe just as little as possible. There seems to be a quite general conviction that the church should come very close to the world in what it believes, and that in the shading over of belief, the church must do all the shading. Don't be very large in this matter of belief! All this has doubtless had strong tendency to create to-day a marked carelessness about the defined statements of the eternal truth committed to our care. It has come to be a common question to ask, and I bought a book titled with the question, "Does it Matter What a Man Believes?" It is a blood-letting question, and the secret of many souls' invalided condition to-day lies in the fact that they have endeavored to keep life on so lifeless terms. Our religion has been reduced to meaningless phrases so often. I am calling now, in a day that is under the strain of life at the highest pressure it has ever known, for a religion that will drink largely of the accessible truths of our God. "My soul panteth after thee, O God!" "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee." This is no day to endeavor to believe just as little as possible and still be called Christians. Such a

measure of belief may keep us just alive, but these are poor days for folks to meet with the consciousness that all their strength is needed merely to keep living. The maximum of belief is what gives life the swing of triumph. The whole church needs to breathe largely of that fact today. We have great fundamentals written in our Book which are not to be held lightly; in fact, they cannot be held any other way than heroically. All down the long story of the faith we profess has been written the fact of the heroism of the believers. It has not been an easy thing to come on down the story of history and cling to our faith. The darkest corners of that story have been lighted with the fires where burned the noble men and women who held faith above life. Lord Bacon has onewhere a phrase that interests me, in which he speaks of "bedridden truths." How well it tells the story! Truths that are ineffectually realized. Dr. Watkinson has suggested "a sick ward for impotent beliefs"—a place where anæmic sentiments and paralytic and crippled purposes could be put to bed. We are troubled in the whole world's appreciation of Christianity with those who are lightly termed, "nominal Christians." I do not know what a nominal Christian is. I have asked many audiences if there were any nominal Christians present, and thus far I have not had one response. But the diluted idea of Christianity

has gotten such hold upon many that it has made itself seriously noticeable. Such phantom belief cannot get our great task done. When I set my face honestly to look at the great program that is drawn before us, I know it cannot be done without great faith in God. There are some words written in the Bible which tell of noble souls who wrought with undeniable strength for the cause, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." That sounds like a church at maximum. That is what belief in God means. Faith, conviction, enthusiasm, sacrifice, heroism —the victory that overcometh self, sin, and the world. We are calling for a profound faith. We need now a belief that will force its undisputed way into our thought, experience, and conduct; a belief that will command our understandings, and kindle all our powers to help realize its ideals. We must believe God, and have the courage to recognize that we cannot carry the word "minimum" and stay with Him. There is no place for minimums in belief in an omnipotent God. If we believe at all, we believe. We cannot forever trim such belief to little ideals. Set as we are to the most overwhelming task that

was ever intrusted to any institution on earth, and professing as we do an allegiance to the God of it all, we must believe largely and act largely. That means maximum faith for the church of maximums, and that is the Church of God.

The second characteristic minimum of to-day the editor noted was the minimum of experience. He declared there was a willingness to have some Christian experience, but a great care that it take no chances at being overdone. "Christ offers his disciples a divine companionship, a companionship which will defeat temptation, pull sin up by the roots, and conquer the evil trends of character. But the church with painful caution seeks only so much of that companionship as will not overdo the effect. It does not desire the result to be too conspicuous. It consents to be good, but dreads to be holy." Regardless of whatever defense any of us may choose to make against such a statement, the fact remains that the church of to-day is painfully low on Christian experience. What power and Christian motive there is in experience! This is a serious accusation the editor has brought against us, if it be true, that we are trying to discover what is the least we can take of Christ in experience without refusing him altogether. What we are in bold need of now is a willingness unto abandon, that will with confident heart accept our Lord's mastery in life with all the

consequences it may involve. We are offered an experience which will not falter before whatever need this day, or any possible day, may bring; an experience that will completely save us from the power of passion, and the sirocco of selfishness, and will effectually empower us to live positively in purity and in service; an experience that will not desert us in the day of fiercest temptation, but will actually in that day furnish us with the realization of that promised deliverance that has been clearly written down for us to believe if we will trust him in every temptation; an experience that will stand beside us with strong arm in the day of great trouble and sorrow, and will furnish sure consolation to our stricken hearts. Who that knows men and women to-day can have failed to appreciate the fact that just such an experience is what the world needs now? We suffer at every restraint that is ever put upon genuine Christian experience. One of the very finest and most impressive stories that was told along the lines in the Great War was about a fine young Italian soldier who refused to desert his badly wounded lieutenant, but, in spite of all his efforts, had to see the officer actually die in his arms. He threw himself across the lifeless body and cried in the overwhelming loss he had sustained and under the impression that all were gone, "Even the King has gone away." Just then he was roused by a

hand on his shoulder, and he arose and stood at attention. "My dear boy," said the King, "my car has gone, but the King is still with you." The little story was told with much feeling among the soldiers, and carried well the point they wished to drive deep into the souls of tried men. But it is a mere lisping of the great fact which Jesus Christ, divine Companion of men and women and little children, has been living into eloquence all down the centuries. The King is not gone; Life cannot drive him away, Death cannot drive him away. The experience of the living, ever-present Saviour of men is the privilege of us all.

Let me note one more and the concluding point the editor made. We are suffering, said he, from the minimum of trust. There seems to be a strange feeling about among men, that we are actually afraid to match our religion against the most difficult things of our day. There may be here and there a hard case to whom the ministry of Christianity is effectual, but somehow we don't carry a positive expectation that the hardest cases are just as easy to our professed allegiance with omnipotence as are the easier cases. I think it was Phillips Brooks who said onewhere, that he could not just calculate what difficulty might mean to omnipotence. If he didn't say that, it should be said, so I will say it now. Anyhow, it is time the world was given the full experience of contact with a church that

actually brings trust in an omnipotent God to the task in hand. Down the years of my ministry comes the memory of a most distressing case of an outspoken sinner who lived near a little country church where I was a young pastor. The man hated the church, and could not tolerate its services as he knew them, and the very presence of a modest little church building in his neighborhood was a continuous distraction to his soul. He was dreaded as a terror by all the church people. He took delight in doing everything he could do to make church services hard. He esteemed it his high duty to break the windows out of that little church with painful regularity. One day to emphasize his hatred he even broke the window sashes, and made the repair bill doubly large. Everyone was afraid of him. They feared to make complaint, because they knew he would quickly transfer his persecution to a personal application. When I came into the neighborhood he was the first man I heard about. The folks awaited what would be done as the introduction for a change of preachers. I began a revival meeting, and one day asked some of the brethren if anyone had ever spoken to that old man about religion. They were all dumfounded at such an idea ever having been thought of. "There is no use talking about him," was the unanimous verdict. "The Lord may graciously save some of our young folks," but for him there

was not even a far dream of the most fanatical enthusiast about there ever cherished. Well, I proposed, since he had never been approached, that we try our trust in God and at least ask him to be a Christian. I confess I was a bit timid the day my proposition had cornered me and forced me to give it a trial. I drove up to his farm with some misgivings, but I did drive up. I found the old barbed-wire gate was down, and without getting out of my buggy I drove in, and saw just before me, sitting under a tree, and all alone, the man I had heard so much of and whom I could not fail to recognize, though I had never seen him before. I checked my horse and said, "Brother, I understand your little girl is sick, and I wondered if there was anything we could do that might be of help or comfort to any of you."

He looked straight at me and said, "Are you the new preacher?"

I said: "Well, never mind that. I came over to see if there was any service we might render you."

He was very fond of that little girl, and said at once and in most cordial manner, "Won't you come in the house?"

I need not here continue the story. I will only say there never has been a bill for broken windows at that little country church since. But it is so easy for us to think our religion may be

effectual to a few best-chosen cases, but must not be ventured on the hardest cases we know. We are putting our reservations, and not God's whosoever, against our task. No wonder we hesitate. No wonder we so often find what we call defeat when we dare so fearfully with the great weapon of our trust. God cannot afford to give victory to any endeavor that represents him so small to the great things that are before us. Here is a wonderfully vital word from the editorial which has inspired this address, and which summary and conclusion I have carried close to the heart of my efforts ever since I read it: "If we believe a little about Christ, take only a little of Christ, do only a little for Christ, and rely only a little on Christ, we can at least feel shame to be satisfied with such littles." It is time the world was given the shock of a church upon it, and mingling in all its life, that has a large trust in an omnipotent God. We are not here asking toleration. We are not here making a survey of world problems. We are here to save the world. We have been equipped of God for the task; we need, therefore, have no concern as to the resourcefulness of our equipment. We only need to see to it that more of God shall be in all our endeavors. The church will never compel the confidence of the world in her work while she is content to do things in so computed and mathematical and logical and human ways as have an easy

expression among us just now. Every other institution can do that. Ordinary bakeries will take contracts to feed multitudes when there is evident plenty of material. None but God will dare tell the crowd to sit down before one little lunch basket. Just as long as we do things along the ordinary lines of human calculations—and there are many things we are to do thus—just as long as we do only so, we must accept our rating as a human agency. The church faces that fact in the verdict of the whole world to-day. There is no other possible line before us, if we would keep keenly our sense of God, than to attempt that which makes us feel through and through our absolute need of the Almighty and by an unfaltering trust in him see it accomplished. God can with our minimum of trust save us perhaps, yet so as by fire. But all that sounds only to me like the salvation of escape and as a Christian on this earth I cannot measure my salvation so. With a maximum of trust, and a daring program which such trust would impose, the world could ere this have been saved. We have been and are still at it, trying to save the world on a minimum of endeavor, and while we may have done encouragingly well in some lines of judgment, I still contend we have by no means been getting what the world waits to see. How many times the question has come leaping out of our halting endeavors at us all: Why,

oh why does the conquest of the world by Christ halt so badly? Why have we not long ago taken the kingdoms of this world for our Christ? If we are his church, why have we not seen more outstanding signs of his power among us? Then we remember what we have brought him. Our minimums stand out. The world needs and awaits a church with God manifest in partnership with its maximum ability. We have subjected the Church of God to the judgment among men founded on the minimum of our efforts too long already. Any other than infinite patience and love would have turned from a friendship fed upon desperation's measure, long, long ago. The times are indeed ripe for a larger demonstration of our faith. Let us hasten to take up the march of our conquest on the largest measure. I want ever in my religion that abounding confidence and that daring boldness which must be the outcome of the fact that God has been received into the fullest measure of my life. I want to feel that I have really brought my maximum for investment. We cannot hope to save the world with a religion founded on our littlenesses. It would not be fair to us. It would not be fair to the world. It would not be fair to God. Minimums cannot be tolerated in the church for to-day. The beckon of this difficult hour is for strong men and women. It is the sublime challenge of a great opportunity. We

must not, we dare not fail. No business this world ever offered to any man can compare in return to the dividends offered by the Church of God. I challenge your already well-formed convictions with the appeal of the hour. I call to a big privilege, for big souls, to do big things. My soul leaps at the idea. We must not represent a great God on a diminishing basis in such a day as this. May God help us to drive all our minimums from the task. We must have maximums of belief, experience, service, and trust, and maximums will warrant maximums, and, God with us, will save the world.

III

THE CHURCH'S UNITY

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—John 10. 16.

THE constituency of the Church of Jesus Christ has long been one of the points of contention by folks who would arrogate to themselves an exclusive right to definition. The contention has not arisen because our Lord was not clear in his intentions. It has always arisen because the church has not been able to climb up to the full-visioned conception of the real relationship of the common race of mankind. Throughout the ministry of our Lord and Master, in his well-planned training of the chosen twelve, and even after his departure from his incarnated presence here; all through the effort of Jesus in the training of his church and people, he has sought to present an enlarged conception of the Kingdom. He came the universal Man among the Jews. The very thought is collision. The Jew could not be universal. He was the outstanding type of the clannish idea. He liked it too. He was a Jew first, he was also intentioned of being a Jew last. He was a Jew. His whole nation's

history had been written in exclusive terms of separation. His separation from other races had been the essential principle of his development, and was used of God to save the Jews to God a separate and peculiar people. All this had been faithfully taught from generation to generation among them in proud confidence of God's favoritism, and brought with it a most bigoted and narrow individual as well as race. The Jew having been so long a special object of separation and care, had forgotten to interpret the fact as being a process of preparation for service, and instead, had come to glory in the fact with an easily understood pride, as an eloquent and not-to-be-overlooked evidence of God's special favor to him. The Jews were God's chosen people, not his favorites. That is an outstanding difference. They were chosen, in order to drill into them a condition of life and ideals, with which they might be used for the great purpose of the true religion among men. Because the Jew failed utterly to rightly interpret his choosing, there resulted in his character that nature which has been most difficult to remove, and which has made him a whole world's problem ever since. He was chosen to serve; he thought he was chosen to receive. He was chosen to become chief minister to the world; he mistook his choosing as favoritism. The hardest thing Jesus Christ had to do in the training of his

disciples, and, indeed, a thing he never did succeed during his human life in doing for them, was to remove their narrow conceptions of God's kingdom and bring them to see that in God's sight mankind is the aim and goal, rather than any one lesser race among the great whole. Judaism completely missed the mission of our Lord as expression of God's love, and when they found that he had not come to restore their distinct nationality, and plant their racial banner on a new exalted place, and erect a high throne on which a Jew would sit consummate among all the sons of men, then they were disappointed in him, and grieved in their long-restrained expectation, and were ready to crucify him and number him also among their enemies.

As I study as written here in the Book, and hear voiced in the early story of the Church, the choking influence of the selfishness characteristic of these special agents of our Lord's work, I am made to feel that the great work thus far largely essential to the progress of the Kingdom has been the expansion of the hearts of its devotees. One of the most outstanding reasons, perhaps the most outstanding of all the reasons, why the church has not spread in its great work into the world's life more than it has, lies in the fact that we, as members of it, have never in proper manner appreciated what it is really trying to do. The Kingdom of God was not

established on this earth for Jews. Conditions did, however, make it essential to establish it through them. The church has not been set on this earth for any class or race, or color, or nation of people. It was planted here by the infinite love of our God for the purpose of reaching and saving the whole human race.

Let us now, before proceeding to the application of our text to the thesis we have chosen, look to a correction in the wording of it, in order that we may clearly distinguish the contention of Jesus, whose words we are using. I read the text in the familiar phrases of the Authorized Version. It has been so long and so well known that the seemingly slight change in it, in the Revised Version, lacks a startle that will impress the fact of the great difference carried. This is one of the most unfortunate passages of all the sayings of Jesus in the old version, which, because of the mistranslation of one word, has fastened into the memory of a multitude the basis for an argument which never did exist in the passage as rendered by our Lord. The trouble in the verse hinges on the mistaken rendering of an important word, and the whole bearing of the passage changes in application when the correct translation is put there. In the first part of the verse the word "fold" appears and is the correct translation of the Greek word *αὐλη* (aŭíle). "Other sheep have I

which are not of this fold." The last part of the verse has again made use of the word "fold." This word is incorrectly translated from an entirely different Greek word ποίμνη (poimne), which word never means fold, or inclosure, but always and everywhere means "flock." All the revised versions carry this significant change. But people read the revised versions but little, and upon first sight the meaning of the change makes no impress upon their attention. This, however, is one of the most significant corrections, in my judgment, in the entire revision of the Bible. It is fundamental. The idea of Jesus was misrepresented in the old version. There is a distinct difference in the meaning of the words "flock" and "fold" as words descriptive of the character of Christ's church. Founded on this false translation of "fold" the Roman Catholic interpretation has built up a false argument for the unity of the church as they have chosen to define unity. But Jesus, in this rarely beautiful passage, was saying nothing of that thing. There may be many folds. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." But there is just one flock. There may be many denominations. That has nothing whatever to do with the fact of the common flock. This is the doctrine of Protestantism, and to insist upon an organic and outward unity as essential to the reality of the church is simply romanizing in its principle.

Let us now, with this significant correction, study the plain application it has to the real meaning of our task and to the interpretation of the church in the world. God has patiently waited, across long and oft-trying centuries, for mankind to realize the true conception of man. Everywhere in the ministry and words of Jesus we are given the argument that the kingdom of God is not exclusive but inclusive. There could never be a program of world intention launched on an exclusive claim. The very idea is self-contradictory. Upon the rigid characters of his Jewish disciples, whose convictions and ideals had been laid by long exclusive conceptions, Jesus was compelled to spend much careful effort, to bring them to appreciate the human vision. God has always had trouble with little men. It is hard to get great human facts into a race clannishness. The curse of the olden times was narrowness. The hindering curse of the present day is still narrowness. We have not yet gotten up to the complete acceptance of all the consequences of the ideals Jesus came to establish. I incline to believe it was exactly for this reason that Jesus chose his disciples almost entirely from among the commoner people of his day. Had he called them from among the rich or the learned classes, the poor and ignorant would have been discouraged. When he sought them from among the poorer and more humble walks

of life, and placed thus there the dignity of religion's real call, then all those above could not doubt their ability too, and all the poor besides took courage. Thus humble men were called to the constructive work of the inclusive Kingdom, and the measure of that inclusion was their message.

You cannot read the hopeful call of this great gospel, and fail to appreciate that the figures used here to apply it are always inclusive figures, and never exclusive. The fishermen who were called from a tiny inland lake and sent out to catch men for God were given a line to fling as deep as humanity could ever be found. There is an essential change in the idea of the Kingdom as expressed in the Old Testament when we find it as used in the New Testament. The old idea was in a manner beautiful, and had somewhat of comfort connected with it, providing we found ourselves included. It was not, however, large enough. Its comfort was like unto that which seeks to be satisfied, when a great storm sweeps, and when terror howls at the corners of the casements, and we pull our chairs close to the fireplace and congratulate ourselves that we are not out. That is a small comfort, but is one way comfortable. That was a close locked-door idea permitted to be used by the prophets, who conveyed the Word to an exclusive nation. The Old Testament is largely concerned

with the guarding and defending of a people. They must be walled round. They must know the security of the fold. The term commonly used was interpreted thus, and those officially to care for them were set to ministries of exclusion. The preferred confidence of a chosen people was built upon that national sense. Outsiders were outsiders, and must wear the fierce names which enemies of the flock were known by—wolves, bears, dogs. The self-complacent security of the favored fold made all those who found themselves included therein believe that all they had to do, in order to insure eternal safety, was to remain carefully within that fold, and that was their great ideal. There was no great burning sense of a mission to the world. Their idea was to make sure their own safety. The Jew was no missionary. He is no missionary. His hope was the fold. The salvation of a church that was merely waiting for the Messiah to come was to be most surely found in carefully remaining within itself. Let this be a warning fact, clear before a modern effort that insists, these great expectant days of ours, on keeping again its eyes fixed on the clouds of heaven whence he has gone, and needs again an angel to startle them from the stagnant peril of gazing, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into the heavens?" The New Testament has brought us a new church which is to be saved in its mis-

sion. The defense it feels is the performance of its task. The exclusiveness of olden times must be broken from, and the work must be done on inclusive lines, and Jesus says, "There are many folds, but one flock." Great inclusive opened doors are these words now. They open out with invitation and full room for all men. The text we read marks the very point of the change of the idea. Otherwhere in his words Jesus changes the whole figure. He makes onewhere the figure of the world as a great field to be sown and calls his disciples to go and scatter the seed. He tells us again that his Kingdom will find a likeness in the idea of the world as a great sea full of fish, and his disciples are fishermen. Again he says his Kingdom is like unto a great feast, and the giver of the feast is solicitous even unto compulsion for enough guests to fill his house. You cannot fail to see the entire change of symbolism for the church. The Church of Jesus Christ must face frankly the fact of its commission. It is not called now to find a salvation of mere refuge. It is commissioned to experience the salvation of service. In the light now of this complete change of purpose let us note the meaning of two terms of our text.

1. There shall be one flock. The reason I have approached this seemingly simple fundamental word with the carefully laid distinction I have

made is that it is the rock on which much mistaken emphasis has been laid with another idea. Church union, on the smaller lines of the obliteration of all denominationalism, has tried for a false defense here. This was not said to so small ideals. This is a plain foundational statement of our Lord about the tremendous and common work of Christ on human character. There has been left to the world a beautifully effective testimony in the eloquent case of David Mendel, a Jew and direct relative of the great musician Mendelssohn. He experienced a remarkable and transforming conversion to Christianity, and in a most impressive and reverential manner gave up the name he had received by inheritance across the years, and compounded for himself a new name from the Greek language, and called himself henceforth "Neander," meaning a new man. Jesus Christ has been creating a new race in this world. Not that he has intended, nor that it would be desirable, for the real distinctions of personality or nationality to be abolished. We will still have many different men, but one Common Man. I am sure I can detect the evidences of that much to be desired condition taking shape now, even amid the fogs and gloom and smoke and sorrow of this great war-trampled day of ours. Christians of all races, lands, conditions are to form this one great common flock, for they are all in Christ.

One flock, where we cannot be Jew, Gentile, Greek, barbarian, bond or free, for we are all one in him. The particular and outstanding enmity between the Jew and the Gentile, which was nursed by the Jew as though it were a virtue, is keenly representative of the great divisioning facts that have been forever breaking mankind asunder. It was with full insight of his divine vision that Jesus set himself squarely against that thing. Such divisions run themselves deep into the foundations of life. It was no little temporary quarrel our Lord concerned himself with. The Jew, with his emphasis upon his own divinely chosen distinction, carried a proud head toward Gentile society. The real grace that could meet that condition and conquer it was such as must carry the healing for a world. And here stands our Lord in this perfectly simple and impressive manner telling us the great truth that shall yet tie a whole world together. Those men to whom he then spoke did not understand it. We have come on, almost two thousand years, stumbling much, but making some progress, and still we do not grasp the truth. But I do believe, as never before, the church is catching step with this great human truth. We will be marching triumphantly with it yet. The people of all the earth are stirring themselves to a realization of brotherhood. It is but dimly outlined as yet in their ideals, but,

though slowly, nevertheless surely, mankind is feeling its earnest way toward a genuine unity. The great common note is getting its tone to the whole world's ear. From the dense forests of the untouched continent of Africa, and the level steppes of the bleak Russian frontier, and the crowding sorrows of eastern Asia's millions, and the blood-red fields of Europe's war-trampled nations, and the busy marts of our own America's eager energy—somehow, I say, somehow this great human race is staggering on; sometimes running, sometimes on broken knees of stumbling purpose, but forever coming on. We are making our common way to the light of human unity, and Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of man, stands ever just before us pointing out the way. There shall be one flock! There shall be one flock! May God make those of us who have dared the name of Christian worthy to wear that name to-day. This is the greatest day the world has ever known, in which to profess such a faith. It is a day when men realize keenly the things that are really hindering the progress of brotherhood. It is not our work to make poor men rich, nor rich men poor. Our Master refused most forcefully one day to have anything to do with even the dividing of an inheritance, which was brought to him in appeal. That is not the matter in which we are to concern ourselves as an activity of our religion. But

it is a very essential thing that such matters as these shall make no difference whatever in our judgment of and dealings with men. There are many things doubtless that we can do which will offer the ministry of kindly interest. Most surely, whatever the church can do in every ministry of real service, in Christ's name it must do. The Son of God is our peace, and in our hearts we must be the genuine sons of peace. The secret of the only true union lies in the meeting together of all the sons of men in our common good. His church is commissioned and destined to become the home of the human family, the universal liberator, instructor, and reconciler of all the nations. Some great glad day there will come the time when this divine Master shall sit enthroned in the loyal worship of the federated people of all the earth, and there shall be one flock.

2. My second observation is, "There shall be one Shepherd." The Shepherd himself says so. There is at once in this figure the advanced idea which is to be characteristic of Christ's church as a flock rather than as a fold. I was reading somewhere recently a little note of a traveler in Palestine who became interested in what he thought was a peculiar construction of the common sheepfolds in the neighborhood of Hebron. The folds were made in the form of a letter C. They were crudely made often, as a mere encir-

cling wall, not joined together and having no door or gate. The traveler asked in a simple inquisitive manner of an old shepherd he met one day beside the fold, why they never have any doors; and was answered quickly and naturally and without any quotation marks, nor knowledge that he was quoting, "I am the door." He meant by his simple reply, which to all of us to-day who treasure his words, as specially precious and meaningful from the sayings of the Great Shepherd, just what he said and which our Lord was himself doubtless quoting in figure. He meant that literally he did at night wrap his simple blanket about his shoulders and actually lie down in that open space of the wall to guard it. He, the shepherd, was the door—the door both of defense and privilege. He preserved both their going out and their coming in, and that too is scriptural. The Shepherd that doors that fold in defense writes in the Book also that he leadeth them out. There cannot be known the real meaning of a shepherd at the entrance of the fold. The mere security idea is not the full interpretation he deserves. The church has suffered across much misunderstood history, when it has been made as ideal in its defense. That was the idea which grew monasticism. It built high walls and hid itself inside its own life, in order to be saved. All this was in no manner a fair display of Christian purpose. The com-

mission of the church was not in that idea. There could be no thought of a commission when the one dominant endeavor was to shut itself in with itself. All such ideals of devotional life as showed themselves in the many manifestations of monasticism were nothing other than pious posing self-indulgence. Jesus Christ has never set the translation of his shepherding care around seclusive defense. His followers were to go forth into the world, there to find their safety in the presence of their attending Shepherd. A church established in a world where evil has an ever aggressive program, cannot justify itself in a mere exercise of its own safety. There must come upon the church which is to save the world from evil the sense of a security which will boldly leave the walls of the fold, and venture anywhere in the confidence of the real presence of the Shepherd. Surely, this great crusading day of ours, when ideas are fighting everywhere for regnancy among men, and when the transitional era is offering the opportunity of real impress to every really vital ideal, this is no time for the church of the living God to put its ideal before venturing, crusading men and nations in terms of a sheepfold. We await, rather, the appreciation of the stride of a crusade in the leadership of One who can both lead and guard. Is it not an inspiring phrase this great leader of ours has set for himself long ago,

to come to its crusading interpretation in this day, when the brotherhood of man is pounding out its hard but determined way to appreciation in all the world, the phrase of kindly, aggressive help—"One Shepherd"? That one Shepherd, we now see, is to become the great world-tie to bind all the sheep into one common flock. Let us, therefore, now be brave enough to be Christians. That is the world's solution. There is only one figure that has arisen upon this world's life that has been big enough to be recognized as human rather than racial. I remember across the years hearing Bishop Quayle tell a plain story of a preacher in a foreign land waiting on a dock to take a ship. He could not speak one word of the language of the people there. In vain did he try to find some basis of conversation with one who stood near, and sought also to speak. He finally drew from his pocket a Testament, and pointed to the word Jesus. They both looked at the name. It could be read by each. They looked into each other's eyes, and reached out to shake friendly hands. Utter strangers a moment before, they then walked along the wharf together and sang together, one in Portuguese and one in English, a common song of the common Shepherd. Jesus Christ is the credential of the world's unity. The curse and constant sorrow of our world is its cliques and classes and divisions. May God forgive us that we have

seen so little of and cared so little for those who are not cliqued or classed. We have not yet struggled up to the appreciation of the great fact of mankind. We think and write our histories in the diminished terms of little races and nations. We await the human fact. We seek the larger tie than race and nation. Surely, of all the times the world has ever known this is the time to get into the wearied hearts of mankind the claims of the common Shepherd. I heard a passionately earnest man from India talking to a large company of men on the problems of his country. He said without any hesitancy at all, that if we westerners would not insist upon making Jesus Christ in emphasis on the lines of our Western interpretation, but would, rather, allow him to come among the people of India clad in those orientalisms they know so well, and which he wears so convincingly, he would sweep India as a great fire sweeps across a dried prairie. Jesus Christ does fit humanity. He fits mankind in fulfillment everywhere. He is the one type at home with man. Other great types of men we have had, but they have been tethered to their own people. Call the roll of all the great ones of history, and you call the stories of nations. There has never arisen among men but one figure that was universal in its type. Jesus Christ is the one Shepherd. God has set him as the mighty bond amid

civilization, and across all the centuries, as the one great common bond of man. We have been confused by superficial proposals dealing with humanitarianisms, and dreaming of universal brotherhood founded on social reform. But they have invariably proven to be of short life because they had no depth of root. Their energy has failed, or spent itself in mad revolt. By oft costly experiments we have found that the coarse selfishness and materialism of the human heart win an easy triumph over every form of mere visionary altruism, and the hope of the world must rest in a power that can make anew the human heart and life. Social barriers, proud feelings of caste, family feuds, personal enmities, national antipathies, all must utterly dissolve and disappear in the overwhelming presence of the one great common Shepherd.

It was mine to be among the hard-pressed ranks of the allied armies in that oppressive period just before the final tide was turned toward victory. Death was rampant. There was no form of terror that seemed too bad to expect. Heroism that waded deep in indescribable suffering, yet uncomplaining, was everywhere. There was a desperation that held on in the gloom, and looked straight into the dark ahead, and doggedly waited. The story of the White Companion at the Mons, wrought from suffering, on a background of terrible warfare, came back

as a story of interest from the field to those at home, who waited in straining suspense for every allowed word of news that could filter through. A wonderful picture was painted by Hillyard Swinstead called "The White Companion," and prompted doubtless by the story from the Mons. The picture went everywhere among the troops, and in the lonely waiting homes that steeled themselves to endure whatever they might be called upon to endure. I saw it in store windows, in cottage windows, in soldiers' tents, in soldiers' pocket treasures, in papers, in magazines. It was a picture that portrayed the hope of a great need. Two soldiers were staggering back from the lines, across a fire-swept field. One was wounded sore, his head bandaged, yet drenched with his life red, his uniform shot to tatters. He leaned heavily on the strong encircling arm of a noble Red Cross man. Just beside them, a figure clad in a radiance that shed its beams upon the faces of the two struggling men and lightened the path ahead, was the form of the Son of man. There was no strange superstition in it. It was an effort of a painter to fasten to canvas what the whole world was longing to realize in its darkened life. Out of its sorrow and sickness and death the world was looking for the leadership of its divine deliverer; the Christ, Son of God, Saviour of man, Shepherd and Bishop of our

souls—he who one great eternally glad day will lead this whole troubled, distraught world of ours out of all its warrings and distresses and divisions into the full realization of its unity, and enable us to live in the security of the truth that there is one flock and one Shepherd.

IV

THE TWOFOLD CHURCH

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."—Matthew 3. 11.

In all the attendant incidents that cluster around the meeting of Jesus and John Baptist there are fine meanings in religion. The old order was changing. It was changing in the sense of completion. The flower of Judaism was being pushed off by the coming of the fruit. John Baptist was the vital connection of all that which had led up through sometimes wearied years to Jesus Christ. Jesus was the completed purpose which had reposed in all the ceremonies of old. Every incident of this rugged witness of the wilderness, who gathered about him an attentive multitude of earnest listeners as he told of the coming of the Messiah, carried far more than the incident. Words were laden with more than words. Deeds were heavy with meaning. John spoke better than he knew.

There have been those who have kept narrowed interpretation upon the passage I have

selected for a text, seeking to find in it by intricate interpretation somewhat of the instructions essential in the mode by which baptism is to be administered. That is the very least of my interest here. Baptism is not a dynamic of our religion. Christianity has been much misrepresented by having its lesser elements made the real motives of it. Many troubles in the conquest of the world for Christ have arisen from the fact that emphasis has been placed on mere incidents. I was on a train the other day when we had a wonderful race with another train running on a track that for several miles paralleled ours. We outran them. I helped all I could. I almost pushed the car-seat in front of me loose from the floor. We beat them. It was not because our train was painted black, and theirs red. That was, however, a matter of choice. Some like black cars and some like red cars. But that is not what makes fast trains, though they both be fast colors. The thing that won that race was found in the big engine ahead, the pressure of steam on those pistons. Baptism is not a dynamic of religion. It is a symbol. You will not get far in the evangelization of the world with an emphasis on symbolism. The actual fact symbolized is what we are concerned about. He who studies John and Jesus merely to find out about baptism is like unto a man who became so interested in the art of a sign-painter

that he saw only the art and forgot to read the sign. John Baptist has actually made his own part so awkward and crude that people could not fail to be impressed by the fact he sought to publish by being fascinated with how he did it. That is the supreme art of the advertiser, and John was the great advertiser, announcer, forerunner of Jesus Christ. He never obscured his message with his method. John never got in front of Jesus. He set expectation on tiptoe everywhere he went. He was subjected to the most severe test that can be put to a personality of power, the test of pushing off personal preference for the sake of his absorbing task. It is not hard to be persuaded that both things can be achieved, but such an agreement in purpose has been, and will forever be, fatal to each. The crowd clamored for John. His position invited the temptation. He was tall enough to catch the testing winds. Small danger of a shrub being broken down or uprooted by the storm. The tall pine fights the gale. The ground-pine is scarce fanned by a storm. "The truest test of all greatness, and especially of moral greatness, is often found in its refusal to be overrated." It does not require the consciousness of greatness to be aware of the genuine meaning of that fact to life. There come times to all of us when we at least feel the temptation not to concern ourselves with impressions that overstate our characters.

We stablish ourselves in the conduct of our self-control thus, by saying that we are not accountable for their ignorance. It is easy to see things we have done overestimated. When folks misrepresent what we do or say in a manner that reflects upon our character, we are not slow to correct it. But when they overestimate some small thing we have done, and magnify it out of all proportion in compliment, it is not hard to suppress our surprise and keep perfect control of our feelings. The intense, concentrate and almost fanatical enthusiasm of vast crowds of people was centered on John Baptist. His passionate preaching had captured them. The reputation he had made was always ahead of him to compel response to whatever he declared to his audiences. Luke has recorded it in his Gospel thus, "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were Christ, or not." What tense preparation such popular expectation as that must have made for the preacher! It winged every word he uttered. It was gathered fuel, into which a spark would start a serious situation. There was temptation to risk a spark. Had John merely maintained silence, he would have been worshiped. Surely, there can be little sin in being quiet! These crowding people are all for you now, John! Such were gentle and easy suggestions that carried the minimum of blame. A

band of devoted disciples surrounded him. They were jealous and angry, when they saw or suspected signs of the dimming of his glory because of the rising glory of any other. Into such a condition John's supreme strength of character shone. Jesus had not been announced, and this was the time when his own fame was at its height, to say his supreme word. Without a tinge of bitterness, but with the true joy of his great privilege he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease," and pushing back the insistent admiration of his followers he startled all those who could not see beyond him and declared, "There cometh" one, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." You call me great, but I am unworthy the lowest slave's service to my Christ! In the Oriental house, the lowest slave waited at the door to carefully unloose the latches of the dusty sandals of the guests. They dared not so much as touch the feet; that duty was the work and privilege of the next higher slave. Such a menial task was looked upon by the audience to which John spoke then, as capable of being done by the very least slave obtainable. There stands their hero upon whom they had been glad to shower honors, declaring for his highest honors, "I am unworthy to the poorest honors due Him."

With this as an approach, I desire now carefully to distinguish the two comparative posi-

tions occupied by Jesus and John as elements in our religion that remain, each requiring the other in explanation. "I, John, baptize you with water, but Jesus will baptize you with fire." The twofold power which must be found in the Christian Church is here. John the worker in water. Jesus the worker in fire. Man and God in religion. The human and divine ingredients in Christianity—the twofold church.

The Church of Jesus Christ becomes powerful and adapted, because it is where God and man get in touch and in cooperation form an actual partnership of service. There is a powerful preachment there, if we can but find the words now to get it said right. It is a message in church announcement too, that is primarily essential to this particular day of ours. There are few more difficult things to get said in this humanly efficient time, in a manner that will get a hearing, than the fact that no proficiency of man can ever build God out. Because man has pushed back the horizon of his efficiency very far to-day, it seems that the sense of outside dependence is hard to make convincing. It is a long way to the break-down of human strength now; that is, if we can imagine just how far a long way would be on an infinite scale. Human effort is forever illustrate in Babel's Tower. The height of the tower matters nothing. Absolutely nothing I mean. The same

truth would be demonstrate were it ten feet or ten thousand feet high. Those ambitious men who were trying to build up a way of their own to God, were to be taught the great lesson that has no nearer a completion on top of the last layer of brick they can stack in their highest tower, than it has on the first thin brick they laid on the sand. Nothing matters how merely high man shall climb. He stands by his own effort no nearer God tiptoe his greatest built-up ascent than he did in the dust of the lowly plain of Shinar. The real approaches to God have long ago taught us that we do actually draw nearer to him when with bowed heads in reverence we stand in the evening fields of life touched by the bells of Angelus, than when in defiance we clamber up some tower and reach out expectant hand. Mankind feeling after God is full of hope as indicative of what that desire will enlist from God. But if he shall have in his endeavors results only of what he can do, he is hopeless. His arms are too short. His vision is too narrow. But, God seeking after man; emerging from those shadows that to our eyes have inclosed him; placing himself in touch of the feeling human desire—that is the hope of our salvation.

The ministry of the two elements water and fire, made use of in the figure John chose, are the mightiest and most resistless of all the forces we know here. Either commands respect. Both

have played mighty and essential parts in the very making of our world. Neptunists and Vulcanists, among geologists, have with care marked out the ministry of fire and water in the making of this globe. By both has the wilderness of the earth been molded. Without water we cannot live. Oh the joy and refreshing gladness of the fresh watered country! Those who have lived where drought has blown its hot, withering breath across the dried fields know the delight of the springing fresh green fields. I have seen the dried, parched earth; the great cracks that opened in the ground; the dead yellowed grass that rustled in the hot breeze; waterless fields; how wretched the very term sounds! So men go far to the mountains and bend the streams to suit their wishes and bring the refreshing waters out on the waiting fields. I remember so well the lovely green evidence that clusters up about the spring of Elisha, at old Jericho. It is a large spring and the gardeners have crowded up with their gardens and planted them to green success just as far out into the dried plains of the Jordan valley as the water will run. But the dead edge of the waterless land lies not far off from the refreshing mouth of the spring which does its best. Water is the more natural element in our understanding, and John used it first. We learned our first step in living by the use of water. Fire we felt our

more cautious way toward. This scientific day of ours has found more and increasingly more uses for it, as we have discovered how to direct it, how to increase its burning, how to increase its heat. The action of fire is inner. We have found out how to use blowpipes and furnaces and forges and retorts. We have found out what fire is good for. Let us seek now for the religious significance of this word of John, the worker in water, pointing to Jesus, the worker in fire.

First John is the declaration of the human part of our religion. I know I am dealing now with a distinction that may be easily misunderstood. We must not confuse John's service. We must not underrate either John or Jesus. Jesus himself, the operator of that higher and diviner element in our religion, not only submitted to but insisted upon the baptism of John.

Immediately after the incident of our text the supernatural and the natural joined hands to march in united campaign to the sure conquest of the world. John's baptism meant, get your bodies clean, make your lives better and purer; repent! This is the gospel of repentance. That is the primary principle in human progress in righteousness. The fundamental requirement upon the human soul is self-cleansing in preparation of God-cleansing. That is fundamental religion. We cannot shift upon God the responsibility of our salvation. "Let the wicked for-

sake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." The provisions of the gospel hang upon human initiative. John Baptist stands for that. He was more than a preacher. He was, rather, an event. It was in itself, to be sure, a very great honor, and a distinguishment to remain forever down the story of men, however long it might run, that he was the forerunner of our Lord. But just as Jesus Christ was to come to mean far more than did the candidate he was that day for baptism, just as that Lamb of God, so pointed out by John, went on from there to his great world-altar on Calvary for the redemption of sinners, just so was the meaning of John's message more than he said then. In that strange wilderness we all have found out, which exists in every life, it becomes necessary that this same spirit shall again appear and make ready there the coming of the Lord. Jesus Christ, and all his power and presence, will not come into the wilderness of your life and mine, merely to blaze his way in reconnoiter. He is not around exploring the human soul. Whenever we shall be participant of the measureless blessing of the coming of our Lord, Redeemer, Saviour, we will have had to make ready that coming by most careful preparation. John's business is funda-

mental. Christianity with all its attendant blessings is not mere reception. Impotence on your part is not an element in the gospel. A broken and empty vessel is not a fair offering for us to bring to our Lord. There is a human task in religion. You can't even grow without effort. The process of growth is work. There must be a tearing down in order that there shall be a more efficient building up enjoyed. Though unconscious to you every particle of your body must pass through violent action, even unto the death of itself, before growth can be attained. There is an essential John-side in the matter of Christ coming to your life. You must go into the wilderness of your own soul. You alone know the way there. Make there a straight way for the coming of your Redeemer.

That is a fundamental principle that must precede Christ's coming to mankind. The church has John's work now to do. The mantle of the Baptist has now fallen upon Christ's church. Give us to-day a church in the world, in which the membership consistently stands for the clean life implied in John's baptism, and the progress of Jesus Christ straight into the world's life will be an unhindered march. I will dare, therefore, now put the searching question to you which all this implies and really compels; I will dare put it to you because I have first tried to put it straight and honestly to my

own heart. Not that in any manner I would seem to come now to make claim to qualify before such a serious question as this is, but, rather, that God will bear me witness, I have sought earnestly that I might be, even with my poverty of life and service, of some help in the great task of the Church of Christ on earth now. I make bold, therefore, to ask, how much, oh, how much, if any, has my life cleared the way about my community for the coming to it of my Lord and Saviour? Let none dodge the issue. We cannot shift the blame. How many lives have you ever cleared a path before, along which Jesus Christ might come? Has there ever been heard in the wilderness surrounding any heart anywhere the true cry of your earnest life, "Make way for the Lord"? I saw a meeting strangely moved one night, and I heard a word from a well-known man among us as we were planning some evangelistic endeavor, that surprised and yet sent searching questions into all our hearts, as he rose and frankly declared that though he had been a Christian from boyhood, and though he had always been endeavoring to do his prescribed work in the church, and was then as he had been for many years an official member in the church, he yet could not say that he knew of the case of one human soul to whom he had been the direct means of acquaintanceship with Jesus Christ. That frank and significant con-

fession set a flame to that meeting, and we found ourselves very quickly dealing with genuine evangelistic fundamentals. That is the human essential in the church. It cannot be left out. It stands in demand before every one of us. There is no excuse to be found in personal obscurity. You will remember here and there all down the eloquent story of the church how some John Baptist or John of Barneveldt or John Wesley or John Callahan or John Yoŭ, actually did reach through the very dull day in which they lived and touched to real result this vital fact. The human side of the twofold Church of Christ.

Second. Thus far we have come in consideration of the preliminary element of our religion, in order thus to be able more quickly to declare what the real dynamic of it is. The human part is preliminary. It cannot be more. Men lose when they hold only that. You cannot light your path at night with a picture of a torch, no matter with how much genius it shall have been painted. I saw a wonderful picture once of a beautiful sun-flooded field. It was a true masterpiece—but we had to turn on the lights to see it. There was not even the softest glow about it. Even so this, though it be essential, human side of our religion is so small that John makes it unworthy to even loosen the shoelatchets of the divine element. It is absolutely

important that I have a clean earth-life. God help us every one at that task. But that is strong because of what it makes possible to bring into our lives, and through us into the world's life. Folks can be good and not Christians—merely good. You cannot be Christians and not good, however. Just as soon as the wires become grounded we lose the whole charge. It is very important that the wires for electricity shall be properly hung and insulated. But they can be hung perfectly from the standpoint of workmanship and still leave us sitting in the darkness. It is possible to have an absolutely perfect exhibition of wiring, simply as wiring. Electricity on those wires is another matter. It is possible to have a good, moral, clean life, and still be only that. But that is exactly what the tragedy of a merely good life is. A good life ought to be a religious life. No man would ever be so dull of perception as to pass along our wire-interlaced streets and think we had merely hung wires there just for the purpose of hanging wires on posts. Of course there is some reason for these wires, and an absolute stranger to our civilization would ask why the wires were there. We even forget the wires along which the light has come, or over which our words have gone leaping with unthinkable speed, unless the light fails, or our phone gets no response. Then we say, "What is the trouble with our connection?"

The genius of perfect equipment is that you forget it in the service it renders. When you are making ready for the coming of the power, then the thought is on the equipment. With familiar figure thus I have been endeavoring to put this fact of our text before you. The church to the world is in this. When we are perfectly adjusted the world has long since learned the religious power we carry. Then no one asks about us, for our righteousness is evident in attained results, and in those results our righteousness will remain without notice. But when the power doesn't come, and when there is no evidence of the divine in our work, no matter how splendidly we polish up the equipment, men ask and ask eagerly, "What's the matter with the church?" Then have we made it of none effect. When the spiritual life flashes out, we wonder what is wrong with the earth life. If an individual seems brilliant, and is yet devoid of spiritual influence, if a church seems strenuous, and enthusiastic in all its work, and yet remains without results in the salvation of souls, and finds itself standing in the community a mere house of empty services, we at once ask, "What is the matter with the earth-life?" The consciousness of a fault somewhere in the human equipment is what we realize when the purpose of the church is not accomplished. John calls the power that is to attend this rightly arranged human prepa-

ration, the baptism of fire. Think of his figure. What agency has ever been found that carries such powerful purifying ability as the agency of fire? You can wash the surface with water, but you will not thereby cleanse the real substance. Beyond John Baptist's side of Christianity is the work of the Christ side of it. The miner brings in from his washing-pans clean, yellow gold. It is beautiful and valuable. But there clings to it, and down in it, a dross which can only be removed by fire. I have gazed into the heated furnace. Why burn the gold so fiercely? They keep a careful registration of the heat there. They told me it had to be done in order to burn away all the impurities. I remember so well with what wonder as a college boy I watched the test of the borax bead in our class in blowpipe analysis. We would burn a bit of borax on a platinum wire at the point of a blowpipe flame until it was absolutely clear. Then we could with its purity, detect the substance of anything it touched by the color it would produce in that pure bead. John says Jesus' baptism of fire is the symbol of purity for power. Baptism of water, human part, is introductory to the real work of God in us symbolized by fire. Moral life is precious. There cannot be placed upon it too high a measure of importance. Would God we were all better. God knows my own personal prayer. But moral life alone is not

sufficient. The real power of religion is not in it. If we have mere morals, what have we more than others? We have no monopoly on morals. The heathen may be good. I have frequently had folks say in a confidence that they had justified themselves completely, "I am as good as church folks." It may all be true. But even perfect wiring may leave your house in darkness. There is no brilliance in wires. It has been true, too, that some wiring not nearly so good as yours has still brought light and cheer into the house. The ministration of John Baptist is not enough. He is unworthy—he so testifies. We must have your very best life. We do not argue that. But the only thing that will purify the life of the church and put into it the power it must have to get its work done is the baptism of fire. There is a very familiar story, become familiar because it is one of the best ones out of mythology, which tells how Epimetheus sent his brother to steal for him some of the fire of the gods. So Prometheus, aided by Minerva, climbed the great arch of the heavens and kindled his torch at the flaming chariot wheels of the sun, and brought the sacred fire back to Epimetheus, proud and confident of its great value. We are not in need now of any such mythological boldness. Jesus Christ has come this way. We need not wear ourselves to weariness in the impossible climb to God. Yet this

has largely been the hard religious endeavor of the past. We will scale the heavens and light our torches at God's altar. Listen, O ambitious day of ours! You need salvation from yourself. You look at science as Prometheus, and with his million-league boots you send him out on the measureless trail of the heavens whose horizons you have pushed back to a farther flung appreciation of infinitude than any other day has ever had, and ask him now to bring again to you the fresh lighted torch from heaven's highest altar. The stories he brings back from his journeys to-day make the stories of mythology sound stale and tame, for we have actually felt out farther and brought in reports from distances whose terms were not even thinkable yesterday. But this modern Prometheus does not succeed, the reason being that the real malady of the race, productive of ignorance and care and pain, is unrighteousness and not what this new Prometheus would have us think. We await, and simply must have God. It is less distance for God to come to us than for us to go to him. This is the message of the Christian Church. This is the ministry of Jesus Christ. Let us get honestly to the world, and with clean life let us help make straight the path for the coming in quickly of the power of God in Christ, that will burn up the dross, and purify and make usable all the gold of the age in which we live. May

the clear contrast of these two elements of our religion stand forth in our lives, and may this simple call here made be used of the Spirit to the genuine building of our faith. God needs you, and you need God, in the big effort to make this whole world better and lead it up to full salvation.

V

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE

"As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel."—Romans 1. 15.

THE message of the Church of Jesus Christ to the age is the ever-interesting question before the churchman who looks upon the church as the institution of God raised up to set right a world gone wrong. The gospel remains the same, but the ever-changing age demands an ever-changing method in order to adapt that gospel to its task. The work of the church has ever been troubled by devotees who could not distinguish between matter and method. The ever-essential fact of the gospel of our Lord Christ has the right of universal adaptation of age and people.

As a Christian man I must seek honestly and diligently to know my age and to understand it. I must know its conditions without a prejudice that would invalidate my conclusions. I must know its motives, its ambitions and its abilities, I must discern its loves and its hates, the problems that distress it, the hopes that lift it. I must detect carefully the sound of its grinding

wheels, the echoes of its delirious pleasures, the sighs and sobs of its sorrows.

There may yet be some quiet, secluded places on earth, from whence men and women can come up to God in judgment and submit a record of mere passive goodness in a confidence that it is enough. I do not just now, however, know where those places are located. There may have been ages in our world's much-troubled story from which men and women could go home to God in assurance that they had shut themselves merely away from human contact and thus found salvation, though I have never yet been able to bring myself to believe I have read into the human story when such thing was justifiably Christian. But I would dread to attempt to walk up to a judgment set against this great day in which we find ourselves charged with living, and bring as my defense, and all the appeal for salvation I could muster, the negative declaration that I had never hurt anybody, or at least no one ever knew I had done so. I stood beside a judge the other day as he was passing sentence upon a man who had been convicted of a very serious crime, and the crushed lives in glaring evidence of his guilt were beside him before the judge. I do not know why he dared speak such axiomatic folly as he did, but from his trembling lips when given leave to speak before sentence was passed, the convicted man said, "If I had only remained

out of the country you would not have caught me." I never heard such words from a judge's lips as leaped out in answer to that coward's plea. Judgment flamed up in response to so weak an idea as avoidance, as a matter for even consideration when positive matters were at stake. The Christian will find no security in avoidance of any responsibility. The Christian Church can never conduct a program of avoidance. It was established with a mission, which mission meant perpetual vital contact with every human need. In the crisis of this day, when social matters are the burden of the soap-box orator's address and the appeal of every plain man's thinking, there surely must be recognized the vital part to be rendered by the message of Jesus' gospel, if it be what we who profess ourselves to be Christians believe it to be. The passion of the church should be expended in delivering that message. I fear me we have been guilty of late of putting our most enthusiastic endeavor on mechanics rather than message.

The busy life of our busy world that is in somewhat blind endeavor seeking now to build back its broken place in industry, is filling our ears with confused noises. Men everywhere are sensing the monopolizing tendency of that life which deals with things. The atmosphere about us blows from a whole world too—a needy world, a world with eager hands outstretched, a world

realizing it must wait at our factory doors. All this means more to us as Christians than we realize at first thought. The church must stand amid it all. It must stand there for something; something distinct and worthy, something great enough and practical enough to be able to ask attention for; something we can feel justified in demanding enthusiasm for, even to the full measure of sacrifice. You men, with the sweat of labor on your faces, and the soil of hard work on your hands, hear ye! We have a word for you. You men who guide our ships and plan our commerce, stop your ships and listen! You men who are eagerly engaged in bringing the golden harvests from the fruitful bosoms of our bountiful fields to the hunger-driven crowds of our city streets, we have a word for you: "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel!" I am saying that unless the church has an absolute profound faith in that message she will not dare run out before such a busy, hard-pressed world as our world is now, and ask for a hearing. We do not dare ask a hearing unless we have something to say. We must expect likewise that when God sent us out to speak to such a world as this he did not send us out with mere words to string meaningless phrases, nor to spend ourselves in mere exercise over matters that were impotent to change the kind of a world we know is not right, into the world such

unrighteousness but argues for, because it is unrighteousness, and that is negative.

The church is risked with a real revolutionizing message. A wrong world could not expect anything else. That fact likewise makes just interest in what the church shall do with its trust. When a boy lies on my lawn playing with a ball and a few marbles, I am little concerned, and concerned as I am, only with his personal happiness. But when he begins carelessly batting a stick of dynamite about, I either change the game or move my location. The world has come to realize that the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is no mere toy-program for the entertainment of a company of people who meet together apart from the world just to talk. That gospel has been delivered to the church, which has been charged to stir it into the life of the world, and the world knows it will change that life when it is done. That gospel has been sent to be delivered in the market, in the counting-room, in the shop, on the dock, in the field, at the counter, everywhere where men and women and children live and work, and to be delivered there not merely as though it had a recognized right there, but as though it had an irresistible mission there. The task of the church is to gather up into Jesus Christ not some but all human life; and the message which is to make that task an accomplished fact is this great gos-

pel of Jesus. It is to be preached not merely from the pulpit, even though that be done with all the eloquence of Paul, who gave us the text we use now on one of his greatest preaching days, but preached likewise by every simple believer who lives its precepts into the actual footsteps of ordinary life. There was to me a most interesting incident of the living message of our gospel which happened in some unpretentious service of some Christians during the Great War. A shipload of Hindus came to France. Some plain Christian workers had been assigned for welfare work among them, with strict orders, and with faithful promise of those men, that they would not mention the name of Christ nor speak of Christianity. Those honest Christians went to merely live the life, as honestly as they could see it, that Christ would have them live. They literally followed his most menial example, and washed the feet of men in need, and ministered to those warriors, Mohammedans and Buddhists, in a living though wordless message. The Hindu soldiers wrote home when they arrived in France: "When we left Calcutta there were no Mohammedans who cared for our souls; there were no Buddhists who looked after us. These Christians have been brothers to us. There is nothing they have not done for us. They have been like servants. Put our sons and daughters in the missionary schools; we want to

know what this Christian religion is." That is what I call delivering the gospel message effectually. Woe be to any life that dares the name Christian that shall dare allow such fertile days as these to pass without improvement.

Jesus Christ is always close to life. He came in order to get God close to man. He is never confused, he is never at a loss to meet any human situation. There is no complicating condition to which he cannot adjust himself; no hindering difficulty, no crushing sorrow, no bewildering defeat, no head-turning victory. Nothing man knows, or can do, will confuse this Christ of God. He is the consummate expression of God toward man, after the long ages of preparation through the needs and calls of humanity. I get the testimony of those typical ones all down the long tedious way when men stumbled onward with expectant eyes, and waiting the full revelation were yet confident of the fact. Abraham, plodding an oft wearied way, but never faltering in his faith, cried out when he couldn't see, but could still trust, "The Lord sees our need and will provide." Moses, standing hilltop in a strange, hostile land, holding up his hands in persistent confidence when all his natural eyes could see was the oncoming hosts of his enemies, still cried out, "Jehovah is my banner." Gideon, temporarily timid, but at last recovering himself and running in his glad,

strange triumph, built an altar and declared, "The Lord is Peace." Jeremiah, from his gloomy grotto, with the sad ashes of the nation sprinkled on his head, and the crash of his falling land in his ears as Babylon trampled it down, still looked out of his darkness to see and said, "Jehovah our Righteousness." Ezekiel, whose eyes unhindered looked steadily to wonderful visions ever beyond every settling gloom, and beheld the establishment of the faith, declared, "The Lord is there." I need not list more of those witnesses down the great story of the Old Testament. The New Testament brings all these persistent testimonies and expectations to a universal answer, and Jesus Christ, friend and Saviour of every man, stands forth. Henceforth he is to be the demonstration, eloquent and conclusive, of God with us, Emmanuel, and to show us effectually that in everything we have him beside us. He is abreast every question. He is actually a part of every calling need. Take this one manifest appeal. We are in social trouble—this industrial-ridden day; day of roaring forges, pounding sledges, hissing engines, straining derricks, grinding wheels; questions of labor and capital, poverty, family integrity, city governments, industrial competition. This trouble-crowded day is sure things are out of harmony. There is a haunting sense of inequality. There is a consciousness of contradiction

between economic progress and spiritual ideals. The disturbance is radical. It is not a matter merely held in the analytical thought-processes of the scholar. It is found likewise in the more instinctive brain of the man who, compelled to work with his hands for a living, has nevertheless by the very process compulsive been putting thus some fundamental social ideas in his mind. It is at the questioning heart of the wearied woman who watches out long nights of trouble and care, and thinks in her darkness toward some light somewhere. Mankind is studying the problem of life with all its unequal burdens. There has arisen among us, too, the belief (no matter just now how logical its arrival may or may not be, the fact of its being here is the fact we must recognize) that this big, hard-hitting, rich, resourceful, army-drafting, democracy-yearning age is the age to settle many of these problems. To this I must be bold to declare my faith as a churchman in the solution God gave me to declare. I believe the gospel of Christ is opportune. Nothing is too hard for this message. "In the newest discoveries; in the broadest philanthropies; in the ripest and purest politics; in the truest social ideals," men are discovering this Christian message. It is a new discovery of the old and oft-stated truth that the world has never lost him, never outran him, never passed beyond his range of influence. He has come on with us

out of all the things we have escaped in the past, the full explanation of those escapes. He is the check upon all wrong and the inspiration upon every good.

O that the church knew better how to declare such a message!

Who are you? "I am a poor woman, who has lost the way and gone all wrong." Get to Christ, woman. He knows all about you. He had a case the like of which yours could never approach. "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven. Go and sin no more," said he then, and, saying that, he was talking to every such case forever.

Who are you? "I sir, am a thief, and condemned in my own heart, as well as at the bar of justice." Say, "Lord, remember me"; and though the affairs of eternity are on his divine soul, he will hear you, for the only thing he stopped dying on the cross for that great day, was to answer a thief and save him.

Who are you? "Just a poor little unknown child." Come to this Christ. Make your way through those big folks about you there, and lift your little hand, and he will see you, and stooping down he will say to you what he said once to childhood forever, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Who are you? "I am a workingman, and a tired, worn soul. I am wearied of work and

strife. I am sick of the turmoil as well as worn at my task." Well, there never was a more beautiful and tender word breathed into the great labor problem than the word personal of Jesus, backed up by all heaven's ability and the eternal heart of God, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Who are you? "Oh, I am a rich man, troubled at the problems my riches heap upon me. When life seems in reach of the things I had fancied the fairest of all things to possess, I find no pleasure in possessing them. Yet I have run my soul tired and broken in pursuit of all this I now possess in dissatisfaction." Well, come to Jesus Christ. He met one day just such a fine-privileged rich man. He would have set that man a power in the world's story forever, had he but heeded him that day. As it was he chose to be merely rich, and we have forgotten his name. It isn't riches; it is life.

Who are you? Your face is sad! "Oh, I am a mother just staggering home through the sorrow of the death of my beloved first-born. The sun seems set forever. It is pitch dark. The music of life is hushed. The fragrance of living has departed. The joy of the world is stilled." Well, mother, you had better make your way to Christ soon as you can. He has been comforting such as you across the years. He can reach through

sorrow. He even carried his conquest of death personally into the grave and through it. He was dead, and is now alive forevermore. He has the words of eternal life. He has soothed more broken hearts, started a new song in more mute hearts of mourning, brought more actual comfort to human distress, lifted more sincere hope over the graves of this world's dead, than all other forces this world knows, combined.

I must not multiply cases. I have noted what I have, illustrative merely of the fact that Paul knew what he was backed with when he spoke his confidence of this great gospel. He was a world-figure for heroics. Rome held the world. Righteousness seemed to have no voice. Lust ruined and ravaged all that was pure. The ties of the family were scouted. The few ground down the many. Cruelty was a boast. Religion was a mockery. No one dared speak. One day a strange figure came trudging wearily along the Appian way. It was a way marked by the chariot wheels of victors and the dragging chains of the vanquished. A little, emaciated, bent, prison-bleached captive in chains would stir slight notice there. I went out once to walk along the same road just to gather courage for my own life. I carefully brushed off some of the old stones that still lie in the pavement and wondered if he walked just there. But he was not noticed. Aside from a few friends who

greeted him at the Three Taverns he came in unheralded. No one knew it was one of the world's great days. No one knew the little procession meant more to the whole world than all the triumphal parades they had shouted along there. The announcement of the message that was to free the slaves, kill the riotous self-indulgence and change the whole story of that wicked city was making ready that day. Never such audacity and confidence—the strongest against the weakest. The tired dust-covered prisoner came dragging his mocking chains up to the gates, and looking full into the face of its magnificent misery and sin cried out, "I am now ready to preach the gospel to Rome." That world-crisis has two contributive reasons for the boldness of the messenger, which I want to emphasize as found in the verse following our text, which make sure our program as Christ's church, in the conquest of the world.

First. An efficient message, "The power of God unto salvation." It is power. That insures courage. A man loses heart when assigned to a task he cannot perform. The reason men get discouraged is that they doubt their resources. Paul was not afraid he had a greater task than power with which to meet it. He was always sure of God. That is the secret of confidence. Little matters it what may come, if we keep clear in our conviction that we have God. Just

what difficulty may mean when measured beside omnipotence we have no way to determine. But we may always rest sure we have God, and trouble ourselves the least as to what difficulty may be ahead. It steadies our courage to really settle ourselves in belief. Nothing needs to be driven into the soul of the church's life to-day more than confidence in God. The world needs to be made to feel the shock of the presence upon it of a church actually endowed with God. We have a strong age to talk to. Someone has diagnosed our day as troubled over the fact that intellectual arrogance and groveling discontent have mated, and brought forth strange creatures of doubt and disbelief. The situation challenges every strength we possess. Has the Christian Church the power, or are we gone out to too big a task? Is it once more a story of Babel, only written in modern terms? Have we undertaken an impossible tower? I know a bit of the day's eager offerings. I know somewhat of the uneasiness attendant upon our economic evolution. I know the clamor of the trades. I know the strain of society and how much of the real strength of the world is being misspent there. I would arise amid it all and declare my unqualified faith in the gospel of the Son of God as the solution divinely devised.

In all these fierce social tangles, whose intricacies seem ever to increase as men are being

huddled together in classes, cleaving along lines that are not just lines of cleavage among us; in this industrial day's expression of competitive commercialism, where the weak are actually being crowded to the wall simply because they are weak, and not because they have not a fair right to live; in our racial jealousies, that have caused men to court racial superiority as the criterion of world progress; in our national antipathies that have unbalanced the whole world's peace and threaten now to destroy our whole civilization; in every complication this much-troubled day can produce, I would make bold to declare my confidence in this gospel. There is nothing too hard for God's church to do, if it is God's church. We are set at a world task, and the creator of the commission to which we are sent is behind our faithful espousal of it, and we need not turn back from its exactions. It is related of that great faithful missionary Doctor Gordon that once while he was making an ocean voyage to visit some mission outposts, the ship on which he rode was becalmed. They lay for many hours near the shores of some cannibal islands. The captain, in desperation, finally went with evident apology for such a suggestion, and not without demonstrated doubt in his suggestion, and asked the preacher if he would pray for a wind. Gordon was not hesitant in replying, but took the captain by surprise

as he said, conditionally, "I will be glad to pray, if you will hoist the sails." The captain, fearful of what interpretation might be hurled at him by his ungodly crew, replied in argumentative willingness that he would hoist the sail if Gordon would start any sort of a breeze. The man of God replied, "No, sir! If you have not faith enough to get ready for the wind I will not offer one word of petition to God." The captain said it would look silly to raise great canvas sails in an absolute calm. The men of the ship could not do it without laughing. The cannibals sitting along the shores would laugh. But Gordon held to his provision, and said: "No sails, no prayer. It is no worse to look silly to men than to stand faithless in prayer before God." The desperation increased, however, until the captain said he would order up the canvas. As the great sails began to be unfurled, Gordon went to his room in the hold of the ship and shut the door in the darkness to pray. For some time he was not disturbed, and opened his soul in earnestness to God. There was a strong knock on his door, and an inquiry from the captain, "Are you still praying, sir?"

"Yes," was the missionary's answer.

"Well, you had better stop," came the reply, "for we have more wind now than we can handle."

It is never a question of power within reach

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of the church. Every failure we ever make must be laid some other where than to the lack of power. I am ready to preach the gospel, for it is power.

Second. "It is the power of God." That we must make clear. It is the distinguishment of the church. We are to do things in a manner that will keep that fact ever before the eyes of the world. The actual power of the church is not such as can be calculated by ordinary tables. The only claim we have is the supernatural claim. We are not organized and set in the world to merely raise up a good standard of literature, or to do a commendable work in social service that will spend itself in mere social service. We do stand for the very best there is to be had in the equipment of life, but a veritable devil may live in good sanitary quarters, and prosper under the philanthropic efforts of mere physical ministry. It is upon the distinguishing element of religious influence we are to practice our work. The music of human redemption is the sweetest song that was ever sung into the human story. Humanity unhelped of God is prostrate and despairing. Hope comes with the message of religion. People are not only willing, they are eager to go to church if they believe their Lord is there to help them. Without him they will not stay to hear about some mere dream of a better day hoped for and

longed for in our need. There is a plain but pointed story in one of the addresses of Doctor Hitchcock, a preacher of a former day, who had a passion that never dimmed for the divine message. It is a story of an old Bedouin who was lost in a desert, and faced the full liability of that perhaps the worst lostness physical the world knows. He had been without food till his only hope lay in the scant possibility that some traveler before him might have thrown away the bare morsel that would sustain his life. At last with the eager eyes of desperation that beheld the mirage of a fountain, he did see a traveler's bag. To his demanding hunger it simply must contain some bread. A crust! Just a dried morsel of bread! Slowly he dragged his famished body over the hot sand to the little leather pouch, and grabbing it eagerly with his last strength poured out on the sun-glistened sand a stream of glorious gems. As they lay there in the desert deadness, and shone in the reflected splendor of the brightest sun, the famished body of the hungry man fell over upon them with the cry of his greatest disappointment, "Oh, they are only diamonds! Only diamonds!" I would stand amid a world more needy of God than any starving desert-bound man was ever in need of bread and say, God forbid that such a story shall ever be the disappointed accusation against the church with its message to our day.

That preacher is foolish and untrue to his trust, and being a divine trust, therefore a privilege, who fails to stand square to the deliverance of this message. The power of God is our endowment. It is all we need, but we need it all. We can take it and confidently ask for a hearing, knowing we have a word of prior interest. The world may be busy, but it never can get too busy, to set this message aside. Human workers cannot wear too weary to listen. Human sorrow cannot strike too deep to listen. Human joy cannot run too gladly to hear. We can ask audience of the world without apology. Our message was framed at the councils of heaven and is prior in every condition human life can know. It will not lessen meaning anywhere. Material treasures will still abound. The iron will be rich in our mines and our furnaces fertile in their flaming treasures. But something else will men find, and the living voice of the message we are to deliver will help them to find their souls. A new ideal will spring up before an un-ideal age; and a new ambition will arise among men through the true life of a church living passionately up to the privilege of its commission; and a new light will break across the world as when the morning has driven the night away. "I am ready, as much as in me is, to preach the gospel."

VI

THE CHURCH'S PROGRAM

"Thy kingdom come."—Matthew 6. 10.

"THY kingdom come!" It is not yet here. There is reason to believe it will some day be here. The coming of that day is not a matter wholly taken over by our God. When Jesus taught us to pray that very significant prayer, he knew what it would be certain to mean to a world into whose consciousness it had once effectually made its way as a real prayer. Every prayer that is genuine, tends constantly to shape itself into a program for the life of the one who prays it. There is liability in a prayer. It cannot be framed at my lips and then forgotten from my life, as though I had discharged myself from all obligations to it when I solemnly said "Amen." I want now, therefore, to look steadfastly into the responsibility which is entailed upon the Christian Church, taught in its establishment to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and continuing thus down the centuries to pray it, wondering often at the slow-footed answer. I want us to look honestly at our duty as disclosed in our prayer, rather than at our

prayer as an easy method of having done for us something that will doubtless cost us most dearly. The idea which has disclosed itself to me in two distinct interpretations of these very familiar words, flashed upon my mind one night as I sat listening to a burning message from the eager soul of a missionary, just home from a wonderful field of work where he had been laboring through hard but hopeful years, seeking to establish the faith he loved among some benighted people. The thought which came to me had nothing whatever to do with the address he made save as it might be related in extreme application. I am full persuaded, however, that in the present world-crisis we must catch the full meaning of the fruited consummation of the flower of our faith. It is a great thing to really have a faith. Unless we have a genuine faith we cannot go far in life. The meaning of life soon runs thin to him who cherishes a shallow faith. But a faith that is a real faith demands an acceptance that will honor it. It is not fair to faith to allow it to merely remain faith. It must become active to results.

The other day I was passing along the street in the downtown district of our city in one of its most crowded places. I saw an unusual crowd of people seemingly attracted by some curious sight, and I risked adding one more to the congestion to make sure I should see any-

thing worth seeing. In the center of the fast-growing crowd sat a quiet, contented looking fellow, a picture of unconcern, seated on the high buggy-seat of an old horseless carriage. It certainly did look like the original. He said it was. No one dared dispute him. The policeman for traffic had to order the fellow to drive away. He was blocking the street. Many folks thought they were trying to go somewhere, and there were so many folks who seemed satisfied with the particular where of that old machine as the place they sought, that other destinations could not be easily attained. There was not another machine along the machine-crowded street that stopped traffic. Here at the home of automobiles, here where every type of motor-machines made make familiar sights along our streets, and extreme types merely excite a passing attention, that hard-looking, unpainted, old, rattling machine caught the attention of everybody. The drivers of beautiful new cars stopped to look. Why? Simply because that crude thing was the faith of a man formulated first into an active program. It was the vital transportation which made possible all this maze of machines we know so well to-day. I saw the first mowing-machine ever made. It was a hard-looking, weather-beaten old piece of work. We to-day could scarce think out so crude an old machine as it was. It sat close beside the latest model machine the factory

could make. The new product was mounted in shining brass, varnished like a parlor chair, and had every joint mounted on steel balls. But the old machine caught all the interest. The spectators circled about it all the time, because it was the first concrete expression of the forward-looking faith of a man, as he put his faith into an embodiment that now has run the world round and helped feed the hungry millions of mankind.

I seek now to find a putting for that great fact religiously. It takes some time for great faith to dominate a man's life. You cannot find a man easily and quickly transformed around a great faith into its actual and logical expression. That faith must first crystallize his very soul. It takes centuries for a great faith to saturate a whole race of mankind. But God is patient, and he has mankind as his objective rather than some fragmentary race of folks, or some nervous generation of people. God abides down the years and patiently matures his people into a maturity that surely leads toward his program. Dim though it yet may be, in the uncertain atmosphere that clings round our world in these stormy days, I yet believe we can discern signs that the great faith that has weathered so many centuries, with all they have been able to hurl against it, is now becoming the dominant program of humanity. Many have had to cling to their faith, merely as faith, and go down in a

troubled sea. Some time ago the whole world was thrilled by that daring Australian, Hawker, as he cut from beneath him every hope so far as men knew, and started out, winging his way over the ocean, dependent upon the actual accomplishment of his goal as the only deliverance before him. As he faded from the vision of the watchers on the shore and sank below the horizon, beyond which was so many miles of watered horizon, he put the thrill of risk for our ideal glowing in all our breasts. There have been a great many since Abraham who have dared to follow the risk heroic, of his farthest going, when he went out not knowing whither he went. The travelers have not all arrived at their destination, so far as men know. But we have come to the place in the history of mankind, I am sure, when the faith of Christianity shall refuse longer to wait for weather conditions and shall calmly proceed to its challenging task.

First. "Thy kingdom come," becomes my prayer. Jesus knew how very essential it was that whatever was to be accomplished in service in the world must first become the earnest prayer of those who are to do it. The Kingdom could not be risked on earth among men, unless it first became the great desire of men. There is much more in prayer than a mere pleading on our part to persuade God to do a thing we simply desire

to have done. I fear there are many who have interpreted prayer as an economical way, really as so economical a method as to tend to cheapness, to get something done which otherwise they might have to do themselves. If I can but enlist God to do my work for me, I shall be willing to make that an object of my prayer. How weak and unworthy such motive is! Jesus established the basis of prayer in his people in order to set them on fire with a great purpose which was to be heroically attained one triumphant day. If "Thy kingdom come" becomes the united prayer of all his people, they will more and more become enlisted in genuine and expectant interest in its coming. A basal zeal in that prayer is what has always made, and makes to-day, the genuine missionary. Nothing but missions can be logical for folks who pray as Jesus taught us to pray. We must not forget that vital truth as couched by someone in a sentence to live—"It was not the church that made the gospel, but it was the gospel that made the church." That is foundational. In all the great history of the church thus far, this great petition has been grounding itself deep in our souls as a convincing prayer. Through great years, and long hard years too, and across sometimes staggering centuries, it has been necessary to lead our people on, while this settled deeper into their lives. The yearning for the experience of the thing for which we have

prayed has constantly increased. The history of the church thus far has been largely written around a prayerful waiting for this consummation. The great martyrs, whose stories we read with gratitude as we trace their passing through flame and smoke, were leaving undying testimony of the establishment of the faith. Fire could not scare it out of the hearts of folks who had it. Nero could not hound it out of women and children, even though he set mad, wild, hungry lions upon them to kill them for a public spectacle; still the faith. The world then settled down into a long, maybe monotonous, period of unconcern, to see if folks who believed in God could actually cling to their belief through years and even generations of disinterestedness. That was a hard test. There were many who faltered. It is harder for faith to survive all lack of interest than to live triumphantly through the fire of persecution. But the prayer never died out. Earnest men and women, all down the years, and down all the years, have agonized to God, and called with passionate souls through the dull sustained pain of an unconcerned multitude about them: "Thy kingdom come! O God, Thy kingdom come!" Here and there have always been found noble men and women, who have been willing to sacrifice position and riches, or whatever was necessary, just to help set the evidences of the Kingdom's faith in countries

far and near. The history of this three-worded text of ours now has truly been written in heroics all down the human story, but it has thus far not advanced beyond the position of a prayer. A prayer which has in it an aim that can be comprehended in any degree by a purpose of the one who prays, must wait the development of that point at which the prayer becomes a conviction. This leads me to my second interpretation, the matter I more particularly desire to say, and to say which I have said what I already have said.

Second. "Thy kingdom come" must not remain merely my prayer; it must become my program. That is the travail of soul which has been upon the church in late years, as it has been realizing the responsibility which attended the transformation of a genuine prayer into an announced campaign. We have prayed our prayer into a conviction. Men who pray as Jesus taught them to pray cannot keep that prayer on bended knee in mere waiting, but must arise to the full assumption of whatever the coming of an answer will entail.

There happened a few years ago at Niagara Falls an event which I am sure bore all the logic of the years, and gave evidence of new responsibility. It was the first visible endeavor to express the growing passion for the conquest of the world that soon became a consuming flame

across our whole church. The suggestion for raising a huge sum of money at a time when the war was monopolizing the great financial forces of the world was declared to be beyond all reason. But a selected conference was called, and a small company of earnest men and women dared to unstop their ears and listen to the cry of a whole world's need. They declared the time had come for the transposition of their prayer into an actual program. They were meeting in a hotel at Niagara Falls, from whose windows the flying mists of the great cataract could be seen, and into whose halls the roar of the runaway power made constant echo. As the company prayed and talked together there the influence of the great falls forced itself into their consideration and molded much the phraseology they used. The editorial columns of The Christian Advocate recorded a doubly meaningful incident, which because of the death of the great Christian of whom it is recorded, has now become doubly significant to us all. The final talk of the convention was made by Bishop Bashford, and it proved to be almost his last speech. He looked so frail as his tall form arose. His great shoulders were visibly bowed under the burden of China which he had so long borne. His body was racked by a severe cough which at times well nigh choked his utterance. He spoke very deliberately, and evidently was overwhelmed

with the seriousness of the decision about to be made. His closing words carry to-day an unusual sacredness, for he being dead yet speaketh. "I trust," said he, "that no man will vote for this program unless he is willing to back it with whatever personal cost it may come to mean, even to the giving of life. With that understanding I am willing to vote for it with both of my hands." There stood one of the most heroic characters of all the missionary story, with his great physical frame actually trembling to collapse, with both hands solemnly uplifted voting to make his long prayer the church's program. "Thy kingdom come!" My faith never was stronger that that is the great growing intention of the church than it is now. I am not worried over the defeat and break-down of the church. I do not believe Christianity is failing in the world. There never has been in my knowledge a time when the Church of Christ was so thoroughly alive to its task, and had with such determination set itself to bring in the victory of our Lord and his kingdom as to-day. If there be any who in espousing the cause of the church to-day think they can avoid an actual forward march to the very front lines in a determined campaign against the intrenchment of everything that is wrong in this world, they are doomed to disappointment. You cannot wear the name "Christian" and be at ease in Zion in

days such as these. We have not been called to support and maintain the bulwarks of any existing order that may not incorporate the whole truth of our Lord. We are the rather commissioned everywhere to be heralds of a better order which is to be. These are days when Christianity must work out its program. Thy kingdom come, O God! I accept the task it means. I do not propose that my prayer shall be made the sum of my effort. "Thy kingdom shall come" has now become the determination of my faith. Whenever my prayer shall become my faith and assume the desire it expresses as its program, I expect soon to be on the march. I know we all feel the wound and hurt of the war, but it has shocked many people into a new sense of their spiritual condition. We had all grown satisfied with a small horizon made of brick and stone, and laid down narrow city streets. Today, as by some fell blow of terrific explosion, those walls are down flat. Maybe through tears, but looking up through vistas shrouded with sorrow, and hung round with tragedy supreme, folks who had grown callous to the best interests of others have now found out that there is a larger and a better world around them than they had ever dreamed of.

Doctor Jowett has said onewhere, that "behind and beneath all the tasks and necessities, and the common groundwork of them all, in which

they are all rooted, is our modern sin, spreading like our soil throughout the world, the bed and groundwork of all our deepest woes." All that does not strike proof into my conviction that the church has failed. For when has the world in all its history known all this as any less true? Sin is not modern. Such things, arisen to our vision as Doctor Jowett notes, are at least evidence that we see them, and our feeling toward them is sure proof that our program is in direct collision with every wrong. The world is calling for the fullest evidence of our faith in redeeming grace. That call comes challenging all of us who have dared to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and expects us to passionately set ourselves to help bring it in. That call has now arisen from what was once a mere dull hunger and conscious need to a veritable clamor. It comes swelling up to us from the unrest and emptiness which is in our age. Everywhere, from lands far away, from the supposed centers of active progress, and from people whose living heretofore has been a dull satisfaction of ignorance as to the actions of other people, the call has now arisen. They are opening their century-dulled eyes to see and their age-bound lips to speak. Everywhere, everywhere the world of men is calling—calling out of long-endured delusions, calling through deep cravings and desires, calling from weariness and sin. There

cannot be any questioning of this by any honest Christian who will listen to-day. I simply arise to ask, how fares the church before such a crisis? Is it ready? Is it ready in you? Is there among us now that boldness which will eagerly respond to the thrill of such a call, or do we find ourselves moving, where we do move, in an evident reluctance that testifies to timidity and even fear? Is the church staggering in doubt and unbelief, or is it leaping forward in the glorious inspiration of a quenchless hope? These are questions that should be granted the testing place at all our conduct now. Personally, I never felt so much confidence in our cause as I feel to-day. I am ashamed of myself and of my little and very evident unworthiness, but I am greatly delighted in my Christ, and in the power of his great gospel. I believe profoundly in the program which is written in our great prayer. I would not perpetuate at my lips a prayer which I feared to make my program, nor would I accept a program for my life that was not first the sincere prayer of my heart. Thy kingdom come! O God, what can I do to help it on? I know the difficulty of the day. I know the fight before us. I know there are many who are discouraged and sad, and who cannot see how we can ever hope to win this world. But none of these things confound my faith. I have never had a faith which was founded on an easy ideal to attain.

I have a faith which is founded alone upon the character of an omnipotent God. It is all I have to keep up my courage, but I cannot think of any other basis that could remain. And with that faith I would take my stand now. One day when war was at its worst, and discouragement was running boldly against many a warm heart in Europe, I met a wonderful soldier, from whom with difficulty I got fragments of the deed that had set his picture everywhere about England, and had prompted the King to decorate him with the Victoria Cross. I met him one evening in a camp of Scotch soldiers shortly after he had been decorated. The incident of his bravery was brought about in the earlier experiences with poisoned gas. Gas-masks were not yet well perfected, and men could not long sustain their positions under the flow of the deadly fumes. A very important position had been under gas for some time. The dogged bravery of those Scotch troops clung out there and choked and gasped toward unconsciousness, and refused to give up. All the men were dull and stupid. An order came along the line to go over the top for a charge. The men simply couldn't go. They staggered in inability. Then Daniel Laidlow, as plain looking an old Scotch piper as ever hugged the bag of a bagpipe, arose from all the obscurity in which he thus far had lived, and took his place among the world's foremost list of brave men. He flung off

his mask, and leaped upon the exposed parapet where shot and shell whistled and roared, and marched back and forth before those strangling men, playing the most thrilling airs he knew, until he literally played them right up out of those gas-filled trenches, and over the top and out to a full victory. O men and women to-day, with Christ's name on our lips in declared faith; if sometimes the depression of the hard task does seem to come down upon us, and crush us into a feeling of helplessness, and we lie prone and listless before the great crying duty just ahead, can we not see this great Hero of ours, "Whose name is above every name," "Whose we are and Whom we serve," marching fearlessly and ever confident before us, teaching us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," in order that we may go out in unswerving loyalty to apply our lives and our best endeavors to make "Thy kingdom come" also the passion of our utmost effort?

VII

THE CHURCH'S ATTRACTION

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."—Zechariah 8. 23.

THERE is religious dynamic in that verse. It is one of the clearest verses on evangelism to be found in the Bible. It is primary in its principles. Not because they were Jews, but because God was with them, was to be their attractive power. Those Jews were all too liable to pride over their own peculiar position. They were wont to bask in their interpreted favors, as if they bore credentials of personal value. It was a constant effort to keep them in right perspective toward God. The argument and value of this verse lie in the contention that the only dynamic of church progress and success always has been, and always will be found, in the fact that God is in it. There is peculiar fitness in emphasis of this fact to-day. There has been started a keen interest in the world about us, in an apparent effort of the church to cater for at-

tention in other and ordinary ways. What will turn the eyes of the people to the church? is being answered by those to-day who would with the skill of mere advertisement find the catch-words or lines that will actually fill the pews and thus justify the endeavor. I would not oppose the method, if any shall choose to use it; I would only ask that the advertisements be strictly confined to the real values we have. I cannot think of a greater advertisement a company could have before any community than that which would make actually apparent to that community the fact that among those folks called church folks God was always present. That is not difficult to discover. That does not require expensive campaign to publish. It is strange how God being around cannot be hid. It is encouraging to know that wherever he is, is an attractive place for folks. Attraction is religion's best compulsion. You cannot argue religion into men. You cannot drive people to church. You can win men to religion. You can attract folks to church.

Not long ago there died out of our Christian work in this world a man whose influence has been of the rarest power. He lived his great life in close contact with human derelicts. At his funeral the preacher, Doctor Chapman, said, "If greatness is to be measured by a passion for souls, by a spirit of love, and by a Christlikeness

in all that he said, or did, or thought, then I say I believe Samuel Hadley was easily one of the greatest men in the city of New York, if not in the whole of the United States." A few years ago I was speaking at a convention in a Western city, and Mr. Hadley was sitting on the platform, in readiness to speak at the close of my words. The platform of the church had been enlarged to make room for a chorus of singers. The extension had been made with heavy planks over the altar rail and across the front aisle, and up very close to the first pews, allowing the occupation of those seats by those who were willing thus to sit with their heads just showing above the platform. Two personal friends of mine who had come from another city only for the personal element of our acquaintance, and having come in after the congregation had gathered, were ushered into the very front seat. They were professional musicians, the lady an organist and the gentleman an accomplished musical director. They were cultured people, and very particular about the form of religious service. Their musical sense was unusually sensitive. They had never heard of Sam Hadley, and knew nothing of the great message of his life and ministry. When I had finished speaking, and before my friends knew what was to happen, the great mission preacher went limping on his big iron shoe out to the front of the platform and began

to sing in his wonderfully poor voice, and in a very unmusical manner, a quite unmusical tune,

"Oh, it is wonderful,
Very, very wonderful,
How Jesus came,
And came to save me."

I saw my friends sink in their cultured conception of a religious song, and when the singer had finished, their heads were not visible from where I sat. When the last dull note died away, the singer commented on the people not knowing such a good tune, and then told one of those wonderful stories of the power of God to save poor sinful men. Then he said, "Now sing it with me;" and in the same poor voice led a number who had caught the rhythm of the verse as they sang it a second time. Then he told another story. It was one of those heart-deep stories he knew so well how to tell, and as he told it the great audience was wonderfully moved, and when he stamped his big iron shoe and called on everyone to sing the song, a great chorus went up from that congregation, and I saw the heads of my friends coming up again. Then Hadley told a yet more wonderful story of the rescue of a poor wreck of a man, and the people cried till a great sob swept over the entire audience, and that song caught hold of every heart and swept up till I am sure the choirs of heaven must

have caught the genuine harmony of the simple strain, and there on the front seat, with the tears pouring down their faces, sat my friends singing with all their hearts,

> "Oh, it is wonderful,
> Very, very wonderful,
> How Jesus came,
> And came to save me."

They experienced the attraction of a God-filled individual. The secret of potent evangelism is there. Not that we shall be compelled to persuade men by argument. Not that we shall be reduced to any of a variety of methods to gain attention, but that the practice of the presence of God shall be the sufficient attraction of the church. It always has been, it is to-day, and I doubt not always will remain, that the greatest power the church has for its campaign of the world is the endowment of God in its life.

We are not suffering for new ideas. The pulpit is not in need of new ideas to preach. What we all need, people and preachers, is power to help us realize a high individual Christian life, power, as someone has said, "that will make us daring enough to act out all we have seen in vision, all we have learned in principle from Jesus Christ our Lord." We are each called to offer to the world the irresistible attraction of a God-filled life. We have in that call the full

right to presume that when that shall have been done we shall actually draw others to him.

Let me call that last remark my first division in consideration of this theme. The primary power of the winning church is the consecrated individual. Of that prime essential we must never lose sight. There is no substitute. It is not needed that we argue against any other good power in order to support this. It is simply the acknowledgment of the superiority of Christian life in the effectual propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the regeneration of humanity. It is always an interesting roll call, that registers the names of those whose clear impress has been put upon the plastic life of this world. If I should be permitted to make a word, I would term these vital lives enhumaned gospels. Why not start a new word anyhow? By whose authority do words arrive? Enhumaned gospels are the powerful points of contact of a saving gospel to a lost world. If we lack the peculiar potent power of individual consecration in service, we lack the real spirit wherein life is put into all our forms. The evident power of the church is its God-filled people. Let the world, amid all it knows by keen experience of life, meet the soul that breathes the spirit of Jesus Christ; see him move through familiar facts of complicate difficulty; watch him in heart-rending sorrow, shot through with biting pain, but sus-

tained and soothed by an unfaltering trust. Let men see such a life, sipping joy and aflame with the presence of God, and they are drawn to religion. It is the God-filled soul that draws men and women to the Kingdom. The blessed church! God knows I love it with all my heart. It affords me the companionships I most highly prize. I will give my all for its work. It can have my life, and every talent I possess, and all the regret I feel in making such a gift is that it is so little and so poor. I love the Church of God. But the church as the church does not touch men for God. It is always the individual. All our history is ablaze with that. It is demonstrated as the evangelistic dynamic all down the church's story. I remember the account I saw of the burial service of an aged minister. He had finished his life-work of many years, in a community that knew the influence of his presence. A great company of appreciative folks filled the church where loving hands that had been taught in kindness by him had borne his casket. Some brethren of the ministry had spoken of his noble manhood. They praised his fine, unselfish ministry of half a century on comparatively small charges. They cited the beautiful consecration of his life as a contented, happy, consistent winner of souls. Then a man arose from the audience, and walking impressively down the aisle, stopped before the flower-covered

casket, and picked out from beneath the beautiful pieces a little unarranged withered bouquet, and holding it high that all might see, he said: "This bouquet, unnoticed by almost all of you, is the beautiful confirmation of all the tributes which have been paid to this good man, whose body we come now to bury. When this Christian gentleman came to live in this town, he was everywhere effectively zealous in his efforts to win souls to God. One day as he was passing along he heard a lad who was playing at a game in the street swearing harshly. He went interestedly and kindly to the boy, and in a manner characteristic of the real endowment of Christianity spoke to him and won his attention and respect. In a short time that boy was a scholar in the Sunday school here. Not long afterward he stood at the altar of this church, to take the sacred vows, and begin the life of God's man among men. The old preacher stood beside him in glowing interest. Through the months since, that boy has proven true to every vow and developed a fine life for Jesus Christ. To-day it was that boy who came here bearing this little bouquet in his own hands, prepared by his own hands, picked by his own hands from the only flowers he owned, the ones that grow wild in the open fields. This bouquet is a tribute of love to the man who brought him to God." The community will never be made to feel the impress of

the church upon it as it should feel it until each of us who call ourselves Christians shall indeed be possessed of the magnetism of the divine presence. The characteristic mark put down here in our text out of the long ago was worded again by the prophet Isaiah, and must remain the same always, "Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee."

If my contention be true, I find myself, therefore, dragged by it to a present day bar of judgment. This resultant fact must be the evident credential of my discipleship. We should be hearing continually from those who meet us, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." I must accept the judgment of my contention then. If this be true, then there remains but one deduction for us ever to make when we find the church not prospering in us. God is obligated to the result; we need concern ourselves only as to having him with us. If he is with us, the result we can trust to him. When the church languishes I cannot doubt where the trouble lies. When we have God we win. There can be no exception. He is our guaranteed endowment. I would say all this in most solicitous interest of the church's advancement. I would press it deep to every heart in obligation. Your life! Your life! It was Chris-

tian life that transformed the steps of timid unknown disciples into the tread of conquering armies going out everywhere, even pressing through the iron gates of heathen Rome and demanding attention of the king of the world. It was a Christian life that transformed ignorant and unlearned fishermen and publicans and associated them with scholarly men transformed in life, to dispute to conviction on the classic hills of Athens. It was Christian life that moved fearlessly out on a commission to all the world when the bounds of such a commission had not yet been dreamed of in men's minds, and, without scrip, or purse, or prestige, actually announced their campaign to win the world. It is to-day the most vital power in the world, and presents before the problematic situation of mankind the only hope the nations have as they find themselves after all their proud advancement tossed in a fierce tempest of sin, and swept by an awful strife of men governed by consuming selfishness. The Christian life, where God actually is disclosed in human association, is the hope of the world. I ask you to assume in your own place the attraction of a life endowed of God. Power for such a life is available for each of us. The responsibility of failing to bring it among men must rest upon us. When a man begins to walk with God a strange change comes over him. Mark Guy Pearse has a passage some-

what thus, in that remarkable little book of his on *The Christianity of Jesus Christ*. I have not the words, but the contention. The Christian man still walks the familiar path he knew yesterday —the flowers, the trees, the brooks, the sky, the stars, the storms, the calms, sun and rain; his pathway remains. But somehow there seems to be a new face to flower, or sky or storm. The duties that called him still call him—his shop, and market, and field, and street and office; his hammer, and trowel, and plow, and pen, and book. Familiar things. But there is a new light in his soul to-day, and he smites with the strength of ten because his heart is pure. He bears on his back the very same loads. Tired! Heavy old word that. How much he has been borne down, and he finds not now any escape from a load. He finds even new exhortation to bear more burdens, as though his shoulders had been strengthened, and not that his task had been lessened. There is new strength in his arm. He meets the same old faces. Childhood's friends are not lost; men and women of familiar name; great men bent to great tasks; ordinary men at monotonous routine. Children in gay, careless laughter—the same faces these. But now there is a new radiance of love upon them, for he has a greater heart in his breast. He is indeed living to-day right where he lived yesterday, but this is Dr. Pearse's argument: "Yester-

day he walked alone; and to-day he walks with God." That's the genius of our religion. That's the evident power of the church. God in us. I know how audacious it sounds for such an one as am I to dare utter such a claim. I shame, God knows, before this little life of mine, to pronounce such a belief. Yet my heart fails me to think of what I would be if I were left without him. Even the great ones failed without him. What could I do then?

I was reading a strange, yet most discerning, comment somewhere on the impressive life of Charles Darwin. The comment was made, after many incidents were given, that his life was, in often very strange notes but nevertheless unquestioning cries, a constant appeal for a definite faith. The writer declared that the great scholar walked carefully along doing his duty splendidly, and with single-hearted simplicity, but just barely missed the way all the time. "The gospel he wanted was just the other side of the wall," was the summarized sentence at the close of the interesting comment. I am wondering now if the figure of the great scientist is not a strong picture of this age of ours. There is so very much in our day which argues to unsatisfaction. So much of our strength just misses the way. So many of our great movements stop short of the real purpose of it all. There cannot be the least doubt in the mind of any carefully

observing man to-day that the most difficult religious endeavor before this wonderful century of ours, that is so proudly enamored of its strength and its science and its culture and its riches, is to devise some means to keep genuine vitality and real faith in the essential doctrines of our religion in the hearts of those who have reduced their religious life to a mere nominal adherence. We are not now troubled with a bold infidelity. That can be met, when once disclosed. But, while the presence of unbelief may not be bold, it is not hard for any good observer to discover a very widespread spirit of doubt, and deadening unconcern toward the fundamentals of our belief. I covet the complete religious triumph of the church, I covet all our people aflame with God. It is to no mere campaign of sanitary plumbing and good ventilation. All of that we will do to-day, and rightly so, as a matter of public safety. The social clean-up is sheer logic of our ordinary sense. I covet now a distinctly religious triumph. Splendid old Rutherford knew what it was when he sang his little song,

> "If one soul from Anworth,
> Meet me at God's right hand,
> My heaven will be two heavens,
> In Emmanuel's Land."

There is but one business worth while. One of

our judges, just from the thriving dockets of his court, where men were forever contending with passion over matters that were secondary, stopped to talk with me one evening just before I was to speak on a street-corner where I had been preaching the gospel a good many times. He said, "Why don't you preach a series of sermons on 'What is Worth While?' " We all know what he was struggling with. The court where men drive so hard, and buy costly counsel in strife over things the possession of which will so soon be shaken from their palsy-struck hands by death that knows no court, arises from its sitting to ask, "What is Worth While?" There is but one business worth while. It took precedence even at the throne of heaven. It conscripted even the only Son of God. It was the only task that could conscript heaven. It consumed Christ with its great passion. There is nothing which offers such dividends to life as does this. Yet is there nothing which requires of life the absolute emptying of itself as does this. It must ever remain that it is not by might, nor by power, but only by the Spirit of God. Then men shall follow him in whom God may be found, not because of the man but because of his Guest. When Jesus Christ trod the earth it is recorded as being said one day by some Pharisees who had been plotting to get rid of him, and to whom his presence was a constant rebuke, "Behold how

we prevail nothing; the world has gone after him." The God-filled life will win. The church's only attraction has ever been, is to-day, and will ever be, God in its life. We cannot think of it as anything less, or as anything else, and it is guaranteed power to live such a life that is offered to all who will receive him. When John Irvine came to die I stood beside his bed. The group of his loved ones had watched him make ready to go for some time. He had lived a long life of service wherein he himself never shone. He had kept a light to show sailors the way. When storms blew hard, and seas leaped in fury, it was the light John Irvine kept that the ships sailed by. For all a long life that faithful man had put that light against the darkness. Few knew him. A multitude followed his light. As death drew near and darkness came down upon him, he mustered his failing strength and lifting his tired head turned his face to the window and asked "Is the light burning?" And we all said, "Yes." And he lay still a moment. The wind howled across the chimney, and whipped against the casement. Visions of high waves, and look-out in mad seas, were in his soul, and he once more summoned all the strength he had, and raising his faithful head asked with all the concentrate interest of a whole life's ministry in his earnestness, "Is the light burning?" And it was pitch dark, but for the light which he so faith-

fully kept. The gleam of that ray has been in my way down the years. Not John Irvine, but the light he kept. God in us. "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

VIII

THE CHURCH AN OPPORTUNITY

"Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."—Acts 20. 28.

THE Church of God is the best investment ever offered as an opportunity for life. Our day, eloquent as no other day has ever been with schemes of the professional promoter, should be in a mood to consider the church as a safe investment. It is time the church was presented to men not as mere toleration but as unbounded opportunity. I would not seem to make its appeal thus as justified merely on the insurance side of our values, as Mr. Babson so very well argues. I would, rather, make it the outstanding opportunity before men, who realize that from mere financial opportunity they have already made wise selection and placed their available means in fertile propositions upon whose dividends they are placing a comfortable confidence against old age and failing health. After all, the mere investment of property, no matter how well it is done, does not carry complete satisfaction. We want the opportunity of life that offers the investment of ourselves in things that lie beyond the realm of our money.

It may be a bit unusual to have the church presented thus, but I am full convinced it is an essential appeal when properly put. Religion has always had to suffer at the hands of men who would exploit it. Men have sought from it that which they could get out of it. I want to stand squarely before every such interpretation of the church, and present it to your attention not as a reward, but as an opportunity.

Nor would I have you cut the measure of your relationship to the church by so small a pattern as mere duty. A dying man beside whom I sat one day, and with whom I was talking about the great call of personal faith in God, said to me in that utterly wide-of-the-mark idea very commonly held about religion's appeal, "Oh, yes, I believe all men ought to belong to the church." The church as a duty is an unfair measure of it, and has never won for it any very effectual allegiance. There are those who give money to the church merely because they think they ought to do so. Many a business man in some little response to some appeal has thus performed a feeble "ought," for the church. All that is a fatal avenue for loss of power. A man never goes very far, nor very nobly, religiously, as an obligation, and what little going he does do thus is tired and unhappy. Enthusiasm in service never found birth in such condition.

I propose the Church of Jesus Christ as our

best investment, and make bold to say that it offers the one really great opportunity for the safe placing of your life, which, after all, is the only really great investment any of us ever have to make, and is still the one about which we figure the least. Our cities are full of business men who pride themselves in their keen sense of values, and think in wonderful accuracy along the lines of dividends upon invested capital, and yet they are not giving any thought to the serious fact that the most precious possession they have is not bringing them a single per cent of interest. Their lives are not invested. What a man does with his life is far more important than what he does with his money. And yet we who can sense six per cent afar off, are utterly indifferent to the cessation of dividends in life investment.

I am told often in conversation, and in the literature critical upon our day, that the passion of this day is turned toward amusements. It is anything but complimentary for us now to agree to that, at such a time when the world is still draining the dregs of the bitter sorrow of the most awful war man ever staggered through. An incident happened in a camp of training soldiers where I chanced to be one day that made great impress on my appreciation of what plain conduct could mean in a crisis. I had gone into the camp to see my son, who was soon to leave for

France. I had just come back from those suffering fields, over there, and the pull of them was on me, and the strange atmosphere which was created, in an artificial effort to make life gay and careless around the soldiers, seemed to choke my sense of the great gripping sorrow that was crushing the world's heart. A French officer had been sent to drill the men. Beyond the drill he could see the actual war he well knew. Some one in the town, in eager interest to do something, arranged a ball, and invited the Frenchman. He sent them back a most polite refusal with the words, "I cannot dance here, while my brothers die there." The far-flying application of that reply must strike keenly at much of our conduct. Who are we to-day, to whose ears the sobs of suffering millions still are plain, above and beyond all the loud huzzahs that victory could proclaim; we to whose knowledge there has come the assurance of many millions in actual starvation's need? Who are we, in so tragic a day as is this, through whose late found peace runs the haunt of a certain dull liability of all we prize in civilization; who are we to be talking now about amusements? There is so very much in this world now that demands all the real strength that life can mean in any one of us, that it is a very small measure for us to offer the world, this matter of how good a time we can have.

When we step up out of this hard day for the final judgment of God, and see our lives measured as to what we have done, the standards before which we have dared judge a good time will look so cheap, we will never agree to them there. We must measure ourselves beside a world where genuine woe has been spilled to a very flood of suffering; a world where actual hunger stalks abroad; a world where actual nakedness shrinks before winter. These are not days to tolerate the complaint of loss of ease. We must catch the real balance of life which is found by making life's best offering rather than demanding its greedy desires. The actual possession of things we greatly desire may utterly wreck our satisfaction. Jesus was vividly showing this in his wonderful story of the prodigal son, by the wide differences in the young man when he first in selfishness cried out to his father, "Give me my portion"; and again, when at the far end of his folly, in the hog-lot of his losses, he resolved, "I will arise and go to my father and say, Make me as one of thy hired servants." Give me, and make me, were the two extremes. A man never writes a very great program for himself around the general theme of "give me." He starts no high career with such a slogan. He sets no pace for heroism there. Yet I am sure the word strikes close to the distinguishing motive of much life to-day. Maybe

it has required a war that would shake the very foundations of the world to reset the stones of society, and drive out selfishness from our souls. "Give me," was running rife in life. So complete was its grip on some that while heroic darings and unselfishness came from many, there were yet those who saw then an opportunity to coin even that to their own coffers, and so eagerly did they reach for their own that they picked up some things that had blood on them. But there were those—and many, thank God—who learned a nobler thing. They cast self-interest aside, and with faces bathed in earnest tears, and with eyes fixed on nobler ministry, heroically cried to God: "Make me! Make me, Lord."

I have dared thus to touch those suffering days, the like of which we pray God the world shall never have to know again, just to say that the Christian way of living is not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The entrustment of life must be made to count for good. That is our best investment. You can get your money placed where it will bring you a good return. That may be a very good thing to do, though I doubt the full satisfaction of merely drawing your dividends as credentials of your success. Who made your dividends? What we want now is just as honest and as passionate an endeavor to find the safe investment of life as we do of money. I was sitting in a street-car beside

a workman going home from the factory one day, and we were talking about life as it happened to look just then, and he said as somewhat of a summary of his questionings: "We work all day to make money, and half the night to spend it; what we need is some one to tell us what it is all about." The church asks attention here.

When we call for life investment we cannot bring small or unworthy ideals. You might afford to risk some of your money in small ventures. It is not an irrecoverable matter to lose your money. I knew an old man once classed as wealthy. He made some poor investments, and at seventy years of age was a poor man again. He swung his old pack-sack over his strong shoulder, and bravely went out into the North Woods, and found an iron mine and died a millionaire. I sat all night long beside one of my dearest friends whose property had all been swept away as by a flood to leave him a poor man. I watched him come back once more to a place of power in business. It is not an irrecoverable calamity for a man to lose his money. But you cannot afford to lose your life. I would offer the Church of Jesus Christ as the greatest opportunity opened in this world for your life. I have been reading that gripping story of Silas Marner, the miser. How he came home at late hours from work which he loved only because he got money for it. The door of his lone abode

was carefully shut and locked. The curtains were all drawn close. Every corner was searched to make sure of his loneness. Then from the secret place in the floor he lifted his golden treasure. He counted and recounted it. He washed his grasping hands in it. He fell asleep with his tired face buried in it. Gold! Gold! Gold! He awakened with a startle, and clutched it all up, making sure he has not lost any, and hid it away in the secret place again. One night after he had made sure he was alone, he lifted the secret tile to behold gaunt emptiness staring at him. His gold was all gone. You know the story of his hunt. But Marner lost his gold to find a better life. I pity the man, Marner or any other man, who one hard day, after the world has all run out, and he has come in and pulled down the curtains and chinked the doors to forbid any other eye, goes to look before God for his life and finds he has absolutely lost it. Placed it wrong, wasted it in riotous living, thrown it away in mere aimlessness. God pity the man who invests life wrong. I propose the church as your best investment. Those who put life there must feel they have contact with all that is best. The church will take your life everywhere in ministry. There is not a need in this needy world it will not lead you up to. There is not a need it would avoid. It winds no skirts of avoidance about it in defense. It does not pass

by on the other side any distress that lies across this world. Every alley of despair is on its calling list. Not a broken stair or a bare room it has not interest in. Life cannot run so far in sin or wretchedness as to escape its solicitation. The Church of Jesus Christ was organized and set to the task of saving this world, by Him who saw what the world was to be saved from. I take my chief joy in urging this great life investment upon men and women.

I used to have a good friend, a Christian Jew in Odessa in Russia, who told me the wonderful story of a poor little Russian Jewess, who was left for dead on the streets of Odessa, a supposed victim of a mob that swept through troubled streets and killed a multitude. The girl awoke to consciousness amid the dead of her own family, who lay all about her there, and whose broken forms she could see in the glare of the burning houses along the street. She dragged her badly beaten body to the steps of a near-by house, and fell fainting there, only to be recovered to consciousness later in some quiet place, where she was hovered over by some whose kindness was endeavoring to lure life back again. Her body was restored to health. She made her escape from her troubled home, and in that strange ability to journey, which has written romance across many a poor immigrant's career, came to America. She made her way.

A great passion was compelling her soul. She worked out an education. On the day of her graduation she had the unusual honors of her class in one of America's large colleges. She then turned her face once more to the land of her sorrows, which was to be the land now of her service. As she left America she set ringing in the ears of all who can ever come to know the life of Jessie Smith her fine declaration of the investment of her life for the good of the world. When I think through such an opportunity as that bruised, ignorant, unknown, but barely living girl, dragging her bleeding body off the street, could make for divine direction, I wonder what God could do with the choice youth of this richly opportune day, if the same passion for service should be granted right of way in their lives.

I was interested in a story I heard a preacher tell one day in a meeting of preachers in spiritual council over some needed church work they were planning. The discussion had turned to the need of passionate appreciation of our task, and a minister arose and told this incident that had happened in a church he knew in his boyhood. A young man desired to become a missionary and had offered his life as such to the church. The father would not agree. They had a serious argument in the home, and finally agreed to leave it to the session of their church. The ses-

sion was called for that special consideration. Father and son were there. When the meeting was called to order, the pastor requested a characteristic old farmer of plain, straight ways, but of unswerving loyalty to divine leadership, to lead in prayer. The prayer was short and direct. He prayed: "O God, thou knowest thy servant Mills, who dedicated to thee in baptism his son, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Now thou desirest the young man for a missionary, and thy servant Mills is mad. Amen." Mills immediately got to his feet and said, "Mr. President, this session was called to settle a dispute between my son and me. There is no dispute between us any more since that prayer. I move we adjourn." The meeting adjourned and the life of another faithful missionary had begun. The Church of Christ is still the greatest opportunity for life investment known among men.

God has intrusted to us the most difficult day to justify living through that has ever been intrusted to any generation. It is far more difficult now to vindicate our right to live and inherit the blood-bought responsibilities of this hour than it was even to go out and die to bring this hour in, for we must now justify our inheritance. You can, if you choose, go on and out of this searching day, and leave absolutely nothing behind you of influence. You can die a death at some not-far distant day, and be carted off

somewhere to a quiet field and buried, and marked with a little or a big stone—little matters it—that will be your chief, aye, your only marker. Or you can here and now make ready the contribution of your life that will register you in service. I had rather leave the contribution of my dedicated life in some vital institution that would come on down the years and concentrate forever about it the diviner ideals of city and country place; an institution that would maintain open doors to an altar where men and women and children could kneel in holy communion and consecration; an institution that would furnish an ever-available calm and sure retreat for souls pursued by sin; that would make permanent a pulpit where the message of God's love should be proclaimed down the years; that would unstop the sacred melodies of great hymns to sing to drooping souls in discouragement the eternal optimism of Christian hope; I would point to the church of Jesus Christ and declare that I had rather have my whole life invested in its great and ever-increasing service, than any or all other investments this world has yet offered. I have little but this all too little life of mine to invest, but with the profound prayer that it may be purged "even so as by fire," if necessary, that it be more worthy of investment in so sacred an opportunity, I would bring it to the Church of Jesus Christ, and offer

it all. We stand upon sacred ground in Christianity to-day. Our place was not won without sacrifice. Noblest men and women have wrought their very life-blood into the foundations. Surely we will not dare pass on to our successors any less evidence of real devotion to the cause. Surely, we will not dare clasp into the plastic condition of this tried age the fingerprints of mere selfishness. These are disturbed days. Just what such disturbance shall ultimately mean in vital reconstruction of human society we may not know. But we are sure there stands before every earnest soul with a genuine offering to bring an effectual and an open door. Failure is always a calamity, but failure of those who have the opportunity of a crisis is doubly tragic. The day is being ministered to by many good things, which are just short of the best, and that is the dull failure of much of our day. I am proposing the church as our supreme investment for life here, because it immediately challenges the world in you with the claims of God. How the church has declared its priceless dividends in life! What flowers of fragrance have sprung from it! What thoughts have been generated by it! What memories cluster about it! What aspirations kindle, what hopes glow, what loves abide, what fellowships comfort, what inspirations gird, what songs awaken, all as perpetual dividends from the Church of God! Come up, men and

women, come up to the house of the Lord. Some of you, if you would but turn your outstanding success to the church now, could most materially assist in guiding this transitional period of history around to the right. I covet you for the church. It needs you now. When I turn my eyes back to read the trying story of much the church has had to pass through, I do profoundly thank God for the faithful souls who have never failed. I appeal to you to-day that you shall help make possible a to-morrow that will look back as proudly upon you. Jesus Christ stands close to the crisis of this hour, and with divine appreciation of what it means to the whole history of the world when it shall at last be written, earnestly invites you to invest your whole life here. And in his great name in the daring cause to which he so perfectly gave himself, I urge now your acceptance.

"Passionately fierce, the voice of God is pleading,
Pleading with men to arm them for the fight.
See how those hands, majestically bleeding,
Call us to rout the armies of the night;
Not to the work of sordid, selfish saving
Of our own souls, to dwell with him on high,
But to the soldier's splendid selfless braving,
Eager to fight for righteousness, and to die.
Bread of thy Body, give me for my fighting;
Give me to drink thy sacred blood for wine;
While there are wrongs that need me for the righting,
While there is warfare, splendid and divine."

IX

THE CHURCH FOR TO-DAY

"No man putteth a piece of new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old."—Luke 5. 36.

THE Jews were sticklers for the old forms. There was a genuine sanctity to them in the way in which their fathers had done things. That which had come out of a long past carried the flavor of an acceptability which needed no apology nor was compelled to appeal to an argument. The dignity of mere age was a genuine dignity. There is a sense in which the fight of progress has always been set against the worship of the past. Every improvement has had to carry the handicap of prejudice for the old, in its appeal for ascendency. Christianity met this fact in its most outstanding embodiment when it first asked for world attention. In every least departure from the old forms the Jews made bold to point out the danger of the new religious organization. They saw that the disciples of Jesus had ceased to conform to all the rites and ceremonies they had received across sacred centuries, and at once went to Jesus with keen inquiry as

to the reason. The Master received them, and answered them with two very keen and significant parables, that carried the argument. He well knew which would be treasured down long centuries yet to be, as the ever-changing forms of a continuous and growing truth should find the attendant difficulties of an advancing civilization, unable to be met by the methods of a lesser yesterday. The religion that is to reach this advancing world of ours must not be stationary in its forms and expressions. Jesus answered these inquiring Jews quickly with two statements framed in the form of stories, saying, "We don't use new cloth to patch an old garment, nor do we put new wine in old bottles." Both parables carried in their real meaning far more than they merely said, and Jesus was content to set them down the centuries to interpret anew to every age the same truth which has always seemed a difficult truth through which to see the application of religion. He meant to say to those inquiring Jews then that the old garment of Judaism was worn past mending, and must therefore be replaced; and the old bottles of Judaism were empty, and being so, carried no promise in such emptiness to a thirsty world, for old bottles (wine skins) could not be filled again, being exhausted in their strength. Christianity was a new principle for life, and needed a new form for men to behold. Jesus was mak-

ing clear, with these homely figures, the fact that religion to continue effective must be adapted to the day in which it is to work.

Conditions are ever new, and the religion that saves man must fit mankind. I stopped recently to look in wondering interest at the first locomotive and rail carriages ever used in our country. They had been hoisted upon a platform, under the high hung roof of a monster terminal of a great railroad of to-day. We who had just journeyed hundreds of miles in all the comforts and speed of the modern railroad, could scarce believe that those crude toy-looking things were the railroad equipment of yesterday. But the great trains we know to-day are the eloquent declaration of the progressive principle of an ever-changing adaptation of steam transportation. The church of the twentieth century cannot do its work in the garb of the seventeenth century, nor of any other century. If civilization and the life of the people shall advance into ever-new and changing conditions, the Church of Jesus Christ, which is set for the salvation of those men and women, cannot remain in the ancient forms and meet its responsibility.

I have heard folks who imagined they had discovered a great spiritual decline because of a change of outward methods offer severe criticism because the old camp meeting has passed away. It was the ideal ministry of real spiritual en-

deavor. The camp meeting was effective because it was the only way a protracted meeting could then be conducted. Settlements were scattered. Transportation was poor. There is no piety in a tent. There is no assurance of religious environment when we are seated on rough boards under canvas coverings. Folks to-day who seek to revive again the fervor and the victories of the camp meeting find the religious purpose is violated because the whole thing is done in the spirit of an outing and a picnic. All this does not mean that we cannot have a changed and better form of meeting more adapted to our day. We want a service of religion that will fit the life of to-day. The religion of Jesus Christ will never be outrun by any generation. It has been designed for the salvation of humanity, just as humanity is or ever shall be. Christianity was not designed to fit a human problem after it had been worked into a certain degree of worthiness and readiness. God matched his plan against humanity, and no changing civilizations or customs that man shall ever devise or evolve will place an uncrossable barrier between the gospel and its task. There is a divine right, and a divine intent too, in the adaptation of Christianity to whatever any age shall be able to present. That means in no manner that the genuine vitality of our religion shall be changed.

There is a great difference between adaptation

for effectiveness and surrender of principle. Because we shall discover a more perfectly devised administration of the gospel from time to time to the real problem of human life is no ground for accusation that the gospel has been changed. When I was a boy the taking of quinine was a common home experience, and to more effectually accomplish the dose, my somewhat inventive mother devised the splendid plan of putting the quinine in a spoonful of sorghum. It never helped the sorghum any, but it surely did make the quinine more easily applied. Since that we have learned how to encase the same essential in capsules or chocolate coated tablets. The quinine is not changed, but has certainly been more effectually adapted to its ministry. The great high standards of truth and holiness which characterize Christianity cannot change. They must remain forever. They deal with the eternal fundamentals. They must remain for kings or paupers, for ancients or moderns, for wise or ignorant. But how to apply them to the particular type of every age is the ever-new problem in application of the church. The Jew placed confidence in form. The way a thing religious was done, he counted of prime importance. The same judgment has caused much difficulty in administration of church endeavor ever since. Whoso would change the form of our religion is an enemy of the church. We have

suffered much shallow criticism springing from that thin soil.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll
Leave thy low-vaulted past;
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell,
By life's unresting sea."

The poet has caught the measure of life there. The only unchanging, set thing we know is death. Life must forever come on into its new-made temple to discover above it a vaster dome than yesterday could know. "What are we here for but to grow?"

There was a time, and not far gone is it yet, when a man's life was horizoned in a little neighborhood. That neighborhood was cramped into the short range of slow horses and buggies. The church could not write a far-flung program. But conditions changed, and the neighborhood horizon was pushed back till it horizoned a state, then a nation, and to-day no man is abreast his time who fails to catch step every morning with the ways and needs and plans of a world. The church form and work must not falter. In fact, it must lead. Mankind is not supposed to go exploring for a place up to which it will be safe to bring the church. Christianity

must stand forever before our race with unerring finger pointing out and saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." The little church at Pinnybog must have news of China, and that Michigan bog is not the bog it ought to be unless the pulse of China's pressing need be felt by its people. Who ever made Pinnybog to be a refuge, to which to flee from the world need? The question they, with us all, should be asking is, How near do we now come to being the church we should be? In seeking answer to that question I shall make two observations.

First. The adapted church will be evident by its fruits in the life about it. This is the most practically tested day the world has ever known. Some of the most skillful men in the great factories are paid high wages just to devise severe testing trials, in order to discover every concealed flaw that may have passed the less careful eye of the ordinary workman. I saw an automobile, driven by one of the officials of a large automobile factory, which had been made entirely from rejected parts. It was made and used as a convincing sample of how rigid the tests for high quality were in that factory. Great business advances thus. If it becomes lax in the test, the cars come back to the factory with displeased customers to announce them. The factory knows it is much easier to find a faulty gear while it is passing from the ovens to its

hardening, than to have the whole disabled car sent back for repair.

Every idea submitted to the world must meet that same fact. Our religion is tested by the life it produces. Thoughtful and far-seeing men in our country and world to-day believe, and are speaking their belief boldly, that we need a genuine revival of simple moral imperative more than we need anything else. Men who are sounding deep into the industrial and business situation are not uncertain in their testimony to this point. The absorbing struggle among us to-day for material prosperity has crowded the Ten Commandments to the wall. John Ruskin, who wrote in sarcasm to his day, dared to rewrite the Commandments, and they can be read with even more meaning by this day than by his. "Thou shalt have gods of ease and comfort before Me. Thou shalt worship thine own imaginations as to houses and goods and business, and shalt bow down and serve them. Thou shall remember the Sabbath Day, to make sure that all its hours are given to sloth and lounging and stuffing the body with rich foods, leaving the children of sorrow and ignorance to perish in their sodden misfortune. Thou shalt kill and slay men, by doing as little as possible thyself and squeezing as much as possible out of others. Thou shalt look upon loveliness in womanhood to soil it with impurity. Thou shalt steal daily, the employer from the

servant, and the servant from his employer, and the devil take the hindmost. Thou shalt get thy livelihood by weaving a great web of falsehoods and sheathing thyself in lies. Thou shalt covet thy neighbor's house to possess it for thyself! thou shalt covet his office, his farm, his goods, his fame, and everything he has. And to crown all these practical business laws, the Devil has added a new commandment, Thou shalt hate thy brother as thou hatest thyself." Such was Ruskin's bitter sarcasm at his day, but he was proclaiming it because he declared "there was restlessness in the heart; unhappiness in the home; hatred in the task; anarchy in the street; all of which things lead to chaos, destruction and death."

Such things most truly stand pleading before this day of ours for appreciation again. Did we not know these words were from Ruskin, we would think they were from the very last page of an appeal for this day. Just recently the great Premier of Britain called a council of ministers to dine with him in Downing Street. After grace had been said Mr. Lloyd George arose to address the gathered guests with the proposition which had prompted his calling them together. He declared, as a statesman charged with the most difficult task any premier of Britain has ever had to face, that it was necessary for the churches to stimulate a spiritual

revival if the material conditions of the nation were to be improved. After a most brilliant tracing of the conspiring causes of the failures of past nations, he turned to his main thesis, which was that England needed a revival of religion more than anything else. Many years ago Plato pointed out the very same fact before the tottering state. The church must be adapted to the times. There was a day when religion was supposed to function when a priest performed services before the people. The priestly service was rendered not by, but for the people; not in any manner to them, but in their behalf. Religious service in the terms of the priesthood was an official function. That conception of religion has passed away. The religion of to-day is a religion of life, the embodiment of all the principles of the human soul.

The second consideration I wish now to observe is that the adapted church must be missionary. I discovered a cult recently in a little country town which presented a new phase of religious claim, so far as I know. Its devotees claimed to be super-religious, and proved it by keeping all they had. They don't believe in reading the Bible. They don't believe anyone on earth will fail of heaven. They don't believe in churches. They don't believe in doing anything. They are pure Don't Believers. You would think, if the frequent objections we hear to the strenuous

appeals of the burdened church of to-day were correct, that a crowd of joiners would be seeking that cult. But it is not so. Folks don't join the church that has no program. The church that is vigorous and crowded with interested people is the one that is set with all its strength even to sacrifice to service. Jesus Christ has a world-program. He called live men about him. The spirit of the missionary was in our organization, and cannot die from our story. Whether we go far or stay near, the same spirit must be in us. The church simply must be missionary. Everywhere must be the practical evidence that we believe the gospel of Jesus Christ will meet and satisfy all the needs of mankind. This is a vital day to make that claim. There is just now a very evident interest in social endeavor shorn of religious motive. There is need of the clear note of Christianity's claim. The social message that leaves that out will fail. I spent the Fourth of July in one of our great prisons. It was hot. The big open court surrounded by the high walls of the prison was shut off from every breeze, and offered the streaming sun an unhindered chance to spend itself. Twelve hundred men gathered for the games. Few ball games I have ever attended had such enthusiasm; Blacks vs. Whites. Then they ate pie in contest, and watermelon with a splash, and then they marched into the big corridors about the cells for a concert

and an address. I looked out over that sea of upturned faces with strange impressions. They crowded tight against the big box on which I stood when at my request the restraint which discipline always kept over them had been relaxed, and they could draw near. I could scarce drive my mind away from the tragedies I knew were gazing up at me. Pathetic faces, tender faces, hardened faces, defiant faces, crushed faces, revengeful faces, shame-covered faces, but men, men, men, always men. I could see over beyond them. After it was all over, and I sat without the great doors talking with the man who stays down there, I said, "Doesn't it depress you?" Then he told me some of his heart-deep experiences. I said: "I couldn't stay in such a place, it would crush my soul." He replied, "Neither could I were it not for the fountain." I asked what fountain he meant. He replied, "My Christian experience." I have thought much about that reply ever since. The social program, no matter how well planned and skillfully laid it may be, will falter and fail unless it has behind and within it a deep religious motive. Lincoln Steffens gave us a remarkable testimony of that fact at a conclusive point of his experience. We need Christianity fitted into the troubles of to-day. There is an obligation attendant upon Christian profession. Its ability is its responsibility. The rampant mate-

rialism that has almost wrecked our civilization calls for some passionate application of the faith we hold. It is time the gospel of Jesus were given the fair chance its origin and heroic establishment entitle it to among us. It is not some strange and inapplicable thing we are endeavoring to do. Jesus did not come to splice a new piece of cloth to an old and wasted garment. He came to make strong the well nigh broken threads of life, and to weave again into many a torn place the strong warp of the renewed purpose. The assurance of such results as our religion constantly achieves should set us all in enthusiasm in its service. George Eliot was sitting before the fireplace engaged in conversation with a friend one evening. Something shook the house, and a rare vase that stood on the mantle toppled to fall to the floor. The great author saw it, and reaching out quickly caught it. As she stood it once more on its place safely, she sank back into her chair and said, "Would God the day might come when we would all reach out as unconsciously and enthusiastically to save a tottering man or woman, as we do to save a fine vase." The story has long been a whip to my all too little endeavor. I am ashamed to think back into my life. So little have I done. So many opportunities I have not accepted. So many shades I might have lifted to let in the rays of hope to some who were sitting

in darkness. How many the begging opportunity I have missed to really comfort sorrowing women in agony at the graves of their first-born! Men, harassed by business cares they have not known how to endure, and tossed every whither by the fever of their distress I have failed to bring our message to. Young men and young women fighting with beasts of passion, I have not shown the way to deliverance. Trembling hearts of those who were passing down into the valley where lie the long shadows of sorrow, I have failed to comfort and lead. The gospel of Jesus Christ was intrusted into our hands with an attendant responsibility that demands the passion of the missionary. The opportunity of service is before us. The call of God is clear in our ears. The church of Jesus Christ stands in every one of its people for the very best there is for men everywhere.

X

THE CHURCH FOR THE CITY

"Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."—Acts 9. 6.

I LIKE that verse. It has such frank approach to the real matter in hand. Never mind now to hold a committee meeting about how to reach the city, or how to solve the difficulties attendant upon work in a city. Get up and go right on into the city and you will find out there what you should do. Without seeking in this place now for the actual matter as related to Saul, who was in trouble with his life, and was seeking to find some way through his blindness into the deliverance of himself from a wrong career, let us make bold to read the instructions as significant and showing a way straight into the heart of one of our great tasks. I incline to believe the church to-day in its difficult position before the city problem has perfect right to read this verse again as instruction for its conduct. Get into the city. Don't endeavor to find an easy way to get out of the city where surviving as an institution merely designed to survive is easy; but

get right into the city, where tasks are hard, and where multitudes wait your ministry, and there you will be told what to do, and find some way to do it. That sounds at least positive enough to be interesting. It sounds as though it proposed that whatever failure did attend its work would be that failure which is joined to honest endeavor. I am little concerned about mere failure or success as men measure them. I am greatly concerned that from me there shall have been delivered among men an honest endeavor to do what needed doing.

I would not seem to pose here now as one claiming any superior qualifications to propose a program for the church in the city. It is not my credential in qualification with which I come. I am only sure I believe in the church's mission for the city, as a supreme task before it, for the reason the people are in the city. The Church of Jesus Christ has been set to save the people. I have had enough experience in different types of city churches to furnish me a point of observation from which I believe I can see some of the vital principles involved in the problem.

Every observer of the modern movements of society must agree that the tendency, very evident in our day, is the organization of our whole life upon a nonreligious basis. Such a serious social fact as that must demand earnest attention of those who lay any claim to be the followers of

Him who planned and announced the plan of a religious redemption of all the world. The reorganization of society must not be on a nonreligious basis, and the place where the social conflict will be settled will be in the great centers of population. The church in the city is the most important church in the world, for the simple but overwhelming reason that the people are there. The importance of any church is its relationship to the people. There is no hope, nor is there any reason to desire that the city church should hope, merely to continue to exist because it existed in a less strenuous yesterday. There is no acceptable plea to make for any type of church to continue to exist merely because it did one day an effectual service. The business of the Church of Jesus Christ can never be done on this earth by a merely existing church, nor by a church to which the matter of existing is in any manner a concern. We were not established to exist. The church in itself is not an end; it is distinctly a means. Its profession as being the divine institution of our Lord justifies the uncompromising expectation of the world in which it has been established that it shall actually succeed not merely in keeping alive, but in making regnant its religious ideals everywhere. There is no alternative before Christianity other than universal triumph or universal collapse.

Prince Bismarck early achieved a notoriety, of

one kind at least, by declaring that great cities were sores on the body politic; which liability he proposed to remove by annihilating the cities. The treatment was, however, not only too violent, it was impossible. Some one suggested that his cure was the same as a proposition to cure a case of headache by cutting off the head. We need not endeavor to escape the fact of the great city. We will not scatter it. We will never make a farm of Manhattan Island, nor grow potatoes along Woodward Avenue. "Back to the country" sounds good, and makes a good sign for the sale of subdivisions, but it will never solve the problem of the city. We are bound to have the cities. Our hope is not to be found in working them out, but, rather, is to be worked out in them. With all the danger-cries that have been started about the cities, our civilization is not scared about them. Every municipality feels the pulse of its own life in a satisfaction founded on a constant and increasing growth. We throw enthusiasm into the pursuit of numbers, and eagerly on census years seek out every available human to establish our position. We are not afraid of the city. We long to pile figures of great cities. Our problem is to make them good cities. The mere matter of numbers is not in itself a problem, other than of feeding and sanitation. But the congested districts in our clustered population-centers present to us the most

characteristic product of our new civilization, and keep liable ever the spreading of undesirable things, diseases or ideas, which may in any one member become easily contagious to the whole mass. No other nation has ever been subjected to the city problem in the manner it is now presented in America. Our serious problem of immigration brings added liability to the city in our country. The simple crowding together of the native folk of a nation offers chance for vice and corruption. There are serious slum problems in London and Glasgow and Paris and Rome. But they are native problems. They do not carry peril to their nations as do the congestions of cosmopolitan citizenship in American cities. We face the serious fact of multitudes of people coming from every quarter of the globe without any sense of our national ideas or institutions. The problem of our cities is being shouted at us in such a babel of tongues that were it not for the universal sense of need we feel, we would not understand them. But the common distress of life may cry with an unknown tongue, and we will understand it. We know what the city calls for, and we know that the Church of Christ in America has world-opportunity in its cities. The city faced by us today demands consecrated earnestness that runs straight into sacrifice, but sacrifice was never considered an excuse in Christian conduct; it

has always been a characteristic. Dr. Scudder, in a thoughtful chapter a few years ago, had a contention, based upon the fact that the agencies that were producing cities carried also a sure tendency to a materialism which would uproot the spiritual elements in society, as it built high the material characteristic. He made this statement, which has clung to my memory ever since hearing it, "The home and the church, the two great moral institutions of society, are three times as weak in the city as in the country, and growing weaker rather than stronger." I do not know how he arrived at his proportions, but I am not inclined to dispute so grave a statement on mere figures of proportion. There is no doubt that the great city, wherein is made evident the only strata of society we are troubled with; where poverty and wealth are each congested, thus beholding each other as though social distinguishing facts; where evils are easily entrenched; where fascinating pleasures, which are set to cater to pure selfishness, are openly exposed; where the strangeness attendant upon multitude seems to loose the moral restraint; the great city if left to itself will prove our swift destruction. But I am sure also I can match the liability with the hope that that same city, with its gathered energy and resources and possibility of cooperation, can, if saved, become the great modern center of power in righteousness. That

is the challenge and the opportunity before the church for the city.

The outstanding problem of home missions used to be in outlying unchurched territory. It has now become the problem of unchurched populations. The Church of Jesus Christ must get into this task. There is no greater challenge to the Christianity of this hour than the challenge to keep live spiritual centers of Christian contact in the midst of the cities. The very things that demand the presence of the church there most are likewise the things that make it hard for the church to live there. All that, however, should but serve to make us who call ourselves Christian more enthusiastic to keep the church healthy there. Difficulty is no excuse for abandonment. The city's need must be the appeal that will keep our altars of worship there. We will not have met our obligation by opening a mission and building an altar where the city can go if it will. We must get into the very heart of the city's need, and kneel there and pray with the city.

The only way the great crowding host of men and women and children who make up the city shall ever be made beautiful is by having among them and with them those who by the power of God can both defy and delight in the city. It can only be defied by the soul who has resources outside of it all, and it cannot be delighted in,

nor helped, save by the soul who has resources inside the crowd, who, in fact, is one of them. The city, with its own keen sorrows and congested sins, has come to-day to expect something from the church. That attitude is both compliment and crisis to the church. The beckon of the city is that we shall now, having proven our ability to work out for ourselves a place among the world's institutions, prove likewise our heaven-high relationship by the ministry we shall perform, and meet it at its hard places. We are ashamed of a retiring church. We must have an advancing church. The triumphant stride, necessary to the church that marches to the salvation of the world, will never catch step to the faint bugle-call of mere survival. We are bound to thrive in the most needy situations. God means that the great city shall be reached and regenerated. Attendant difficulties are nothing to plead, by an institution whose profession and creed link it to omnipotence. Need is our appeal. There can be no refusal from the Church of God to the extended hand of real need.

I shall never be able to erase from the retina of my memory the miserable leper beggars sitting along the roadside outside Jerusalem over beside Gethsemane and the Virgin's Tomb. I had grown callous to beggars. The ordinary appeal of a beggar's outstretched hand had lost its

influence upon me because it had become so constant. I could pass beggars in the streets and forget them. But those poor lepers I could not pass. How compelling their cry! What wretchedness in their rags! What undeniable appeal in their outstretched arms! Fingers gone, palms gone, mere stubs of arms held out by some. Tin buckets sitting before them to catch the offered alms. I could not pass them by. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," were the heroic words with which our Master identified himself with all his divine powers to the very sentiment of human need. We who follow him cannot avoid his conclusion. The cry of the great city cannot fail to awaken our consecration. The finger of duty points straight: "Go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Told thee there: Get to the place of your service and your orders will meet you there. That is a new order in religious service. This is a new sense of the expectant communion with God. The ancient ideal had been to get into the solitude of lonely places, and there, with all the noise of the world shut out, listen for God. Here is a new word. Here is an order that breaks with the past. Get into the stir and whirl of the city, and listen there. The Christian Commission restates religion.

The first problem of Christian life is to enter actually into the very condition in which earth's

millions must live, and discover right there the message of God's ministry. There have only been thus far found two ways in which religion can regard itself toward the world. There was only known one way until Christ came. The old effort of religion was to save itself by avoiding the world. The new way is to save the world through yourself. It is a coward's plan to desert the world because it is unclean. It is a Christian's crusade to make the world clean because the world's conqueror has come. Get into the city and listen for God, there where life battles tumultuous and strenuous! There where streets are crowded with men and women! There where love, and hate, and discord, and harmony, and rivalry, and jealousy, and life, and death are; get right there and listen! That word has the command of the Christ back of it who had then died and risen from the dead in order to get to mankind the message of salvation. He who had wept over the city, he who knew the tragedy of the crowd, he who could not stay on the mountain top, even in communion with heaven, while the multitude in need stretched out appealing hands. This is new! This is Christian. Get into the city. You will meet God there, because men and women and children are there, and they are God's chief concern on this earth. The cloister was a hideous mistake. It must never again have an emphasis as a Christian program.

We must plant ourselves in the very midst of the most needy situations of the world and not only exist but prosper there.

I have a profound conviction that God has arranged a divine balance in human equipment, a balance to be proven and justified in a regenerated whole race of mankind. Man has in himself sufficient energy to unitedly bring success to all. To me there is no finer call of the gospel than this, that the superabundance of ability in some and the handicap in others can be made to unite in hope for all. The serious situation with our day, however, is that the strong by their very strength are becoming affiliated. We have made most of our discussions of the problem of our cities around the things caused by the congestion of misery. The wretchedness of human life forced into the seething caldron of our city slums is surely a crying condition which needs help. I incline to believe, however, when we think straight into this we will agree that we have been putting undue emphasis upon what, under present-day customs, has become a compulsion; and you cannot cure troubles by dealing with resultant elements of those troubles. We discuss the slum with solemn conclusions that it is a dangerous environment in which to grow human life. Every inhabitant of the slum will agree. They need no argument. The condemnation is axiomatic. The folks who make the condition

deplore it as much as those who inquire into it. The slum is a double-faced problem. The suburb is just as much a problem as is the slum. The problem disclosed in the slum must be considered from the standpoint of the suburb if you would get the honest view. The congestion of enlightenment is as serious a problem to the whole situation as is the congestion of misery. The task of the church is to save mankind. The extra strength of the world, which because of its abundant endowment, or by the mere chance of some good fortune, has a margin of privilege, is to-day sadly withdrawing itself from the needy situations of the world. The strength for the evangelization of the slum is to-day reposing in the splendid equipment of the suburb. The suburb is voluntary; the slum is compulsory. The strength which made possible the flight into the suburb must likewise carry there the responsibility toward those who could not escape, and so by handicap of ability are left to constitute the slum. The cry of the great city to-day is tuned at that very contradiction. The slum cannot lift itself out of its distress. The underman cannot rouse himself and shake off the burden of his handicap. There is too much on him. He must do his best and I have faith to believe he will. I am not asking that his own burden shall be borne by anyone else. It is good to let him carry his own responsibility.

I remember a few years ago the owner of a tall building found his nearest neighbor, a little one-story saloon building, coughing smoke and gas up against the big overtopping neighbor. The big building instituted suit and won the case compelling his neighbor to build an eighteen story smoke-stack on his little one-story head just to recognize his obligation to those above him. I am not advocating that the small and the weak shall not carry their own obligation. I believe they will do that. The under man surely thus far in this world has borne his share. But because he is the under man he can no more than furnish the margin on which he shall be rescued. Goethe once wrote this strangely egotistical and self-sure word: "The man who has life in him feels himself to be here for his own sake and not for the public." It was one of Goethe's not too rare heathen spots made manifest. It has been refuted many eloquent times. Personal issues must be swallowed up in a sense of something greater. Every man and woman must come to appreciate that position within a farther-flung horizon than self. No one is big enough to furnish bounds for his own endeavors. The evangelization of the slum is bound inseparably to the suburb. The extra strength which makes a foremost possible must be added to the handicap which makes a hindmost imperative; and together they will both win.

I saw a college footrace. It was a handicap. It interested me very much because the best runner started behind for the good reason that he was the best runner. The poorest runner was out in front to start. It was a new version for service. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," were the divinely heroic words voicing for Jesus that sentiment perfected to the life about and ahead of him. The command of God is sounding in and back of this cry of the city, and says in unmistakable words, "Let the strong bear the burden of the weak." The voice of the city is not a mere roar and grind of wheels and shafts and machinery. That voice is intoned in the sorrow of human hearts. It has in it the stirring appeal of tastes, and powers, and joys, and hopes, and virtues, and sins—all those familiar things of our own hearts. Jesus never failed to detect them. He unraveled the composite cry of the streets into the pleas of individuals. His great heart was ever for them. He gave himself for their sakes. O God, hear the cry of our city! Have done the prayer. We have prayed thus too long. God does hear that cry. God help me to appreciate the cry that has arisen to a very roar in my ears to-day. In the city we must discern what now God has to say to us here. The church must meet the situation. The salvation of the so-called upper class will be found in its evangelization of the under class, if the variant alti-

tude can be detected. You who have strength enough to absolutely eliminate the problem of making a living, know you your strength is needed in supplement, for vast numbers are daily actually utterly done out in the hard fight to keep the wolf from the door. There are times when I am blinded with my own tears and sickened with the touch of the misery of our troubled, crowding life. The city is jammed with sorrow and need, and holding it all square before my face, and tight to my interest. There come times of tense heartache to me. The sins of men rise so menacingly that the reform of the world seems well-nigh hopeless. I have many, many times gone from my sacred pulpit back to my study, and have seen the tiny efforts of my little feeble ministry fail and disappear like the bubbles I used to blow and start away looking so splendid, reflecting all about them on their bright faces, only to snap out to leave absolutely nothing where they were. O my God, I have cried, what a task is this to which I am set! I am in the city! I wait thy word! Speak! Speak, Lord, that I may know what and how I ought here to do thy will for the city! I lift my eyes away from my own feebleness. To look at my little hand, and head, and heart were discouragement complete. I would open my ear to thy word, and my eye to thy presence. It is God's personal presence that puts courage into my soul. I even grow confi-

dent with him, I am ready to make boast. The city's cry will be heard, and the city will be saved when God's church will get earnestly into the city and there do God's will.

"The greatest church in all the land,
With wealth and power in its control,
Holds naught but ashes in its hand,
Unless it guards the city's soul.
What means this stately granite pile,
To Christian worship set apart,
If crowded streets, mile after mile,
Feel not the throbbing of its heart?

"Respond! O Church! these myriad calls,
Appealing, come from street and mart,
Where every man whom sin enthralls
Expects a welcome to thy heart.
Reach out, O Church! this is the hour
To make thy ministry complete!
God waits, to furnish thee the power,
To lift the city to his feet."

XI

THE CHURCH AND CHILDHOOD

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them."—Matthew 18. 2.

THE challenge of childhood stands squarely before the church that engages itself to save the world. There is no more opportune challenge before us, and yet a challenge to which a great percentage of our people are seemingly indifferent. I make such a statement founded upon an experience in the regular work of the pastorate, in charges ranging from the country schoolhouse, as the neighborhood meeting place, to the strenuous program of the city church. It is a pitiably small percentage of the church people who appreciate even in a small degree the crucial issue which is strung before us in our accessible childhood. The eternal responsibility devolving upon us as a church to-day, for the molding of our own childhood, and the childhood within our easy reach, is the most fundamentally constructive fact that presents itself to us, if we would transform to righteousness this sin-broken world. We can never save a world by the hard, slow work of reclamation.

We must save it by spiritual cultivation which will root itself in youth. We are wearied often these days by the continuous presentation of problems. We have had so many problems brought to our attention that we no longer are startled by them. But of one thing have I become thoroughly convinced. In the abundance of the discovered things that are wrong, and the serious problems presented in finding out ways to combat them, everywhere they have served to center the keenest attention of those who love and aspire for the world's upcome upon the foundational issue in childhood. Every great social and religious problem ultimately returns to the child for its solution. That statement will not meet much, if any, dispute, and yet it is no more than a mere passive conviction among us, and does not yet inspire a united campaign to capture and save the children.

A few years ago there was a quite well advertised interest about the world of a doctor who claimed to have discovered a cure for tuberculosis. He was a German physician, and at once, because of his scientific standing, his claim was given scientific care in observation, and he was assigned a special company of children for his experiments. They announced at once that if the doctor's method was correct, and his treatment successful, there was no reason why tuberculosis should not be absolutely stamped out in

one generation. Treat the children, they said. How keen the scientific conclusion! The name of that physician will not now be known to many who read these words, and is remembered by me only because I clipped the accounts with mere watchful interest, which would have become world knowledge to-day if the plan had succeeded. They tested it on childhood. How eloquent that scientific method for the church! We are in reach of success when we accept the challenge. We cannot go into the mature situations and work out there a complete social evolution from the rugged already set characters of men and women; though we have thus far in our endeavors spent the overwhelming amount of our enthusiasm and endeavor in that line; but the children can be molded. The fierce and oft forbidding problems of immigration to our country never will be handled successfully by spending our energy on the adult immigrants, who come emerging out of century-molded conditions which have set their lines and ways and prejudices in their characters, and dictated their judgments and thoughts from childhood. The only hope this to-day badly troubled nation of ours can see, before the problem of our pouring immigration, is in the childhood thus brought, and made opportune to us to mold to our new ways and win to our new ideals. The rescue work in mission halls on the Boweries of our

great cities presents a constant challenge of evangelistic interest. They pull out of the slough of sin and vice a few remarkable and hope-inspiring cases. But they cannot save the cities. The slough of evil will fill up faster than rescuers can pull the victims out. I favor the mission work, I am always glad to lend every possible help I can to the interesting endeavor. But it is salvage; it is not remedial. The real task is to defend the little ones from the liability of the slough of the slum, and to drain that slough. Until the Church of Jesus Christ turns its vigorous attention to methods constructive, with childhood as its objective, our cities will become an ever-increasing menace to our nation and to the whole civilization of which we are a part.

There are a great many things which carry alarm for the student of conditions as they are in society to-day. He who seeks startling human facts will not have far to go. But the most significant startle I have felt in any news I have read for a long time came to me recently with a report issued by the Sunday School Board of our church. The appalling fact in America to-day to me is that eight million of our children are now receiving absolutely no religious instruction, Protestant or Catholic. One third of our childhood is Christless. One third of the generation upon which we are to found the hope of to-morrow is unapproached for religion. The other two

thirds are poorly enough made ready by the slight attention religious we give to preserve that two-thirds proportion. But one third of our children are absolutely religiously abandoned. The first and greatest duty of the church is to conserve its childhood. One day, according to official program, Queen Victoria made a visit to one of the larger provincial cities of England on an important public function. Among other impressive means of showing their appreciation of the great queen, the city had organized and trained a wonderful choir of four thousand boys and girls. They sang the welcome of the city with most impressive harmony, and the whole occasion was long to be remembered. The next morning when Victoria was back in her palace she sent a message to the mayor of the city. It had no reference to any of the many civic formalities and honors that were shown her. It went out, rather, as a message straight from the nation's great mother heart: "The Queen wishes to know, did the children all get home safely?" I know of few things, of all the many impressive things the great English queen ever did, that made her mean more to me than that. Are the children safe? The nation cannot ask a more important question. The church cannot help answer a more vital appeal. Never was a greater challenge made to those who were to try to do the work of God on earth than when Jesus

took a little child and set him in their midst. If the strong and talented men and women of the church would but face that challenge as the appeal the Sunday school has, and bring themselves there to help us answer the challenge, we would find ourselves in the midst of the most constructive revival the church has ever known.

It is an overwhelming testimony when we find, after careful analysis, that eighty-two per cent of the church membership to-day came in through the doors of our Sunday schools. That should put enthusiasm into the heart of every worker there. There is, however, attendant blame, and severe charge to lay against us, when we find more, that only a scant fifteen per cent of the pupils of our Sunday schools ever unite with the church. Eighty-two per cent of what we now have came from but fifteen per cent of the schools where the children were within our reach. If we will save the loss of that eighty-five per cent of our Sunday schools, we would increase our churches four hundred and sixty-seven per cent—an increase quite within reason. The care we are now taking of the great problem of human construction is no more ultimately hopeful than the tactics of the good Samaritan as a policy to eliminate the danger on the Jericho road. I do not fail to appreciate the fine ministry and pity and benevolent service of the Samaritan. I favor every bit of it too. But it

is not constructive. In fact, it is an enabling policy. If nothing more be done than the rescue and care for victims, no matter how tenderly it be done, it would but clear the road of fatal evidence of robbery and cruelty, and make the continued work of the robbers more easy. I would not minimize in the least the fine work being done by our public schools. May God bless our great free schools. But our radical swing to unlicensed liberty has hushed the voice of the majority in our republic as to religion. The minority sit regnant, and boastfully so, in the fact that we dare not in the schools we have founded and support lift our voices in religion. Hence we turn to the church in its own direct activity for response. When we enter this realm of training in the moral and religious fiber of life, we are confronted with the fact that we are doing what we alone can do in a sadly imperfect way. The criticism attendant upon such a fact must not be put upon those who are doing what we are doing. They do not claim they are doing what should be done. They are only doing the best they can. The great company of strong men and women of our churches who have never felt the first sense of obligation upon them for this work, must accept a great share of the blame. The very most important matter before us all just now is the fixing of the great principles of righteousness and religion in these forming

characters of our children. I wish somehow the great values involved could be disclosed to all our appreciation. If we but knew the truth that is now within impressive reach of our religious interest, we doubtless would bestir ourselves. Old John Trebonious always appeared before the boys in his class with uncovered head. He kept within himself as their teacher an evident sense of awe. It was impressive, for he stood as in the presence of to-morrow when to-morrow was impressionable. He used to say: "Who can tell what may yet rise up among these youths? There may be among them those who shall become learned doctors, sage legislators, nay, princes of the empire." And even as he spoke thus, there sat before him in that little class that then unnoticed boy who was to become a character to shake the world, for John Trebonious was even then teaching Martin Luther. There would be great reverence of conduct if we could but see what is before us in the childhood we have been intrusted to impress. Instead of our being anxious that they should show us honor as their seniors, we would stand in awe before those upon whom a greater to-morrow shall rest. If we could but behold as now accomplished the wreck and havoc some of the boys and girls will make of life to-morrow because we have not been true to the opportune hour we were risked with before them, there

might now be stirred in some of you a passionate endeavor to secure yourselves against the caustic blame a failing to-morrow will launch against you if you fail.

There was a most bitter indictment of society hurled from the sharp pen of a young fifteen-year-old girl from out one of the prison places of our own State not long since. Her letter was broadcasted over this country through our papers and made us all cringe as we read it. This keen and convicting charge was in the epistle: "You have made me what I am. I have learned evil in your Juvenile Detention Home. I learned more with worse girls in the House of the Good Shepherd. The Girls' Reform School taught me new evils, and then the Canfield Avenue Station, where I was penned with a nest of dope fiends, taught me the dope habit. You have made me what I am." Such an indictment our city and system sits before. There is an intelligence and an energy and a real personality in that young accuser. Had those elements but have been won and directed into use instead of sin, she would doubtless have been a useful and constructive force for righteousness. One of our newspapers made the accusation of the girl the basis of an editorial to say that the "Detention Home, the Institution for Wayward Girls, the County jail, and the State prison were without any dispute the greatest institutions we have

for the making of confirmed criminals, more effective even than our streets. We do not solve the problem, we are merely stating it." I am not now to argue the matter thus stated by our editor, but I do want to emphasize the conclusion which he brought after a lengthy editorial in the tone of the paragraph I quoted. He concluded with this word, "The boys and girls of this community must be saved before they get to those institutions."

A few years ago in the city where I then resided occurred one of the most shocking crimes it has ever been mine to be a close observer of. Two young lads, after a most spectacular robbery, killed a citizen and a policeman, and made their escape, only to be captured later, and brought to most tragic conviction. They were sent to the state prison, one for life, which was a short sentence, for he died soon, and the other for a long term of years. The lad who lived into his sentence was a remarkable boy, and was reached by one of my close friends in religious interest and became an interesting correspondent of his. I want to quote you a portion of a letter he wrote one day, and which letter I have always counted as among the most remarkable letters I have ever read. After a fine word of personal appreciation for my friend's interest in him he said:

"Reflection in the quiet of my cell here forces

out into relief the revelation of how unnatural to a human being imprisonment really is. From a state of seeming indifference to my crime, which the several journals attributed to me after my arrest, I have come through a change, till now the gravity of my position stands revealed in all its frightful nakedness. At times the knowledge of my circumstances and position are oppressive. The fact is, that while in school, which by the way was conducted excellently, it did not enable me to grasp more than a mere superficial knowledge of the important part I, even as a boy in school, held in the community. It is true I was not considered backward nor mentally deficient. Furthermore, I had been but recently confirmed in the church. Still bearing all this in mind, when the crisis came, the instruction I had received was not rooted deep enough to sway and direct my actions in a laudable course. I do not cite this as an indictment of anyone, but the cold, hard facts stand out that the education gained on the streets, such as it is, glitters and attracts, while that of the school and church hold no lure for a boy. But now from this vantage point of observation I realize and appreciate the beauty which lies within the bosom of the church, the public school, and, not last nor least, my Christian home. The serious proposition that life is, is now correctly assessed; the tuition came high, but has been used to an advantage,

and whenever the opportunity comes to me to prove myself, I can say in all sincerity I shall not be found wanting."

Ever since that letter came into my hands it has been influencing my enthusiasm for the attractive work the church can do on childhood. He makes a cutting statement in the declaration that we leave the glitter and lure out of our religious endeavor. What right have we to make righteousness labor thus under handicap? What right has the street to a glitter and attraction in its prosecution of evil ideals, while we in the name of God, seeking to touch the eternal and moral elements of the boys and girls, shall permit an easy failure for the dull reason we did not lure childhood in the way.

I remember a splendid layman we had some years ago in Kansas City. He was one of the most determined workers for childhood I have ever known. We called him "Fiddling Reed," because he was bound to make his Sunday school just as attractive in music as evil could make any hall to invite them into. He used to conduct a mission Sunday school in one of the congested and neglected sections of the city. He had a successful school, which was run as a branch school of the large one of which he had long been superintendent. One Sunday afternoon when he appeared for the service there was a characteristic German band playing catchy, rollicking

tunes in the street, in front of the chapel, and every one of the scholars of the Sunday school was in the interested crowd. The band marched away playing a sprightly march, and every scholar of that school followed down to a near-by beer garden. Reed stood on the deserted doorstep of his chapel and said, "I will beat the devil at that game if it takes every band in Kansas City." The following Sunday he was there with the very best band he could get. They had the crowd. He took them all into his chapel, and with the band to lead they sang hymns as they had never been sung about there before. He stayed by that job too, and many a little street urchin started from there for manhood and God. The devil has no right to the monopoly of the glitter and attraction he so frequently uses in his work.

The church is charged with the responsibility of the most precious possession in the world. If we had all the diamonds and jewels on one beam of a scale to weigh against the soul of one lad, he would outweigh them all. That is what this Bible says in not obscure words. I slept one long night with ten thousand dollars in cash in bed with me. I would not say I slept. I remained in bed. It was the worst bed-fellow I ever had. My chief concern was in the hope that no one knew I had it. I spent the whole night making sure it was still in the bed, and when

morning came I got it to its owner as quickly as possible. If we tremble in fear over a few thousand dollars, how shall we dare go up to our heavenly Father, and the lad be not with us, as it is forcefully asked in the Word? Our trouble is that we do not appreciate where the real values of this world repose. There came into my hands recently a remarkable report of the Children's Home, of Cincinnati. It was titled "Is It Well With the Child?" That society for over fifty years has been caring for homeless children, and by strictly sanitary and distinctly Christian environment has endeavored to save them to society. They keep a careful record of all the cases they have reared. One after another those little waifs, picked up, deserted on doorsteps and in public places, have been carefully built into noble lives. The general counsel of one of the largest railway systems in America was one of their boys. The general freight agent of another of the largest roads was another. They have kept a careful record of five hundred of the earlier cases of the home who have gone out into the world and have now had a fair chance to succeed or fail. Four hundred and eighty-four of the five hundred, or ninety-six and eight-tenths per cent, have turned out well. That is enough to furnish keen interest to the comparative student in heredity and environment. Some one in comment on these remarkable results

wrote: "I believe in the blood of ancestry; but there is also a blood of kindness, a blood of loving interest, a blood of unselfish sacrifice; and these effectual bloods will tell an inspiring story one day of lives purified and purposes strengthened." Surely, the Church of Christ will not fail to see the great challenge its Sunday school presents it with. It is time we were concentrating our greatest interest and expending our most passionate endeavor on the children. Our people are busy building houses for flood and fire to destroy; they are absorbed in piling up fortunes which will soon be scattered by the greed and scramble of those who oft impatiently await their death; why not catch the unmeasured opportunity offered in the multitude of children all about us, and put genuine impress of holy interest there by the help of God, that neither flood nor fire can harm, and that cannot be dissipated by greed nor wasted by carelessness?

"You may be Christ or Shakespeare, little child!
A Saviour or a sun to the lost world.
There is no babe born but may carry furled
Strength to make bloom the world's disastrous wild.

. . . . . .

"Oh what then, must our labor be to mold you?
To open the heart, to build with dream the brain,
To strengthen the young soul in toil and pain,
Till our age-aching hands no longer hold you.

. . . . . .

"Vision far dreamed! But soft! If your last goal
Be low; if you are only common clay,
What then? Toil lost? Were our toil trebled, nay!
You are a soul, you are a human soul!
A greater than the skies ten-trillion starred,
Shakespeare no greater, O you slip of God."

How shall any of us ever fail to appreciate that? If there is a hope for our day; if there is not to come an ultimate wreck of public morals; if barbarian lawlessness shall be restrained from the destruction of our constitution; if the oncoming hosts of life we see but dimly now in the dawn of childhood, are to be defended from the debauchery of evil; if sin, clothed in the most attractive books and ballads and pictures, is to be overcome in its campaign for our day; and if our Christian faith is ever to prevail among men, then many, many of us there must be who must make it our accepted prime duty to arise from our lounges of refined, self-satisfied, and fashionable religion, and gird ourselves carefully for some very hard and painstaking work. The means are at hand. The existing mechanism of our organization now ready, can carry a true religious influence throughout every existent branch of life. What we now await is a concerted, consecrated, zealous application of the strength now latent in our laity to set the current in motion. The effectual religious education of childhood is the open door to a regenerated

society. All the strenuous endeavors we make on adult conditions are handicapped. It is like writing on granite or twining the gnarled stiff boughs of an old tree. We are battling with the handicap of a self-satisfied age to-day. Our great wealth has engendered a taste for luxury that soothes us to slumber in the midst of danger. This tends ever to weaken the principles of holiness, and our children have grown up in conformity to the world, and the problem with all its heartaches bursts upon us. Cities, towns, and frontier all present their own distinctive evils; and the total impress of Christian doctrine, we are told, is only slight. This would be a national fact, and carry the hope of such a limitation, if our country to-day were comprised only of the children of the more choice original stock. But to all that must now be added a new ingredient caused by the accession of many millions of men and women and children who have come from various and vastly different nations. Often they are not only unchristian, but infidels, whose unbelief has been generated under false church domination. Often they are popish in their origin, and in many cases much less inclined to pure Christianity than the whole body of the citizenship to which they come. We are not, therefore, surprised to hear often a note of pessimism for the future, and a contention that the moral tone of society as a whole is suf-

fering a severe depression. Such testimony is listed from our police courts and our prison rolls, our journals and our immoral amusements, our popular violence and our bold intemperance in life. It is indeed a most serious question for the Christian patriot, and one that he dares not be careless of, the solution of which he must most truly throw himself zealously into whenever the proper course of combat is made clear. The fact is a great challenge to every man and woman who believes in God and professes his name, to bring every influence they can command and invest it for this work. We need you in the Sunday school. Every church should be equipped with the impressive presence of large numbers of men and women in classes of interest, if for no other reason, for the one great fact that their presence is impressive of the genuine worth of the work upon children. Give us a great company of interested men in every school, and we will have a firm grip on the boy problem of that community. The glaring absence of manhood has long been a handicap some communities have had to struggle against in their religious endeavor for boys. Mark you well that, after all is said and done for the finest system of educational methods and organization in our Sunday schools, the one chief virtue of the school is not in the information imparted to the scholar but in the religious and moral deposit made in

the child life. Men and women who are persistently careless of the great endeavors of religious training must take the blame that accrues.

There used to be about a little story that made impression of interest on me as a boy. A preacher was visiting a little school in a wretched part of a great city one day, and being requested to say a word to the children, he began by asking a question, "How many bad boys does it take to make one good one?" A bright little fellow from the streets, who had been reared—what little rearing he had received—entirely on kicks and cuffs and curses of the street, answered with quick confidence, "One, sir, if you treat him right." That same lad at a later day became one of the most efficient teachers in that school. Would God the fine Christian philosophy of that simple little story would seize all our lives, and become the basis of faithful passionate service by our obligated men and women of talent and ability. What you do for a child may move the whole world, for, like old John Trebonious, you may be doing it for another Luther. It seems to me that church history is about ripe for another giant. Conditions call for one. You might be the discoverer.

Recently from an unoccupied field in India there came to one of our missionaries an appeal, requesting that he come to the village and conse-

crate in baptism and take into church fellowship a class of seventy men and women. When the services began the missionary noticed a young lad, not yet fifteen years of age, sitting in a back corner of the room looking anxiously and listening intently to the service. After due examination, the class proving to be unusually well prepared for the sacrament, were baptized and received into the fellowship of the church. Then the watchful lad approached timidly, and requested like treatment. "Do you too desire to come into the Christian Church?" asked the interested missionary.

"Yes sir," was the plain answer.

"But you are quite young, my boy, for a convert to come from the field of heathenism," answered the missionary. "If I were to receive you at once into the fellowship of the church, and then you were to fall away, it would bring discredit upon the church, and do a great injury to the cause of Christ. I will be coming this way again in about six months, and if you will begin to-day and be very loyal to Jesus Christ during that time, when I come then I will gladly baptize you, and receive you into the church."

No sooner were these words uttered than the people arose to their feet in protest. Some speaking for all the others said: "Why, sir, it is he who has taught us everything we know about Jesus. We are the harvest of this lad's life and teaching."

So it proved to be. That boy was the minister of that spontaneous church, the honored instrument of God for saving all that company to Christianity, and for planting firmly the gospel of the blessed God in that village.

"A little child walked by my side.
I had lost faith in God and man.
He prattled of his joys and hopes,
As only little children can.
I did not try to blast his hopes,
I did not tell him of my pain,
But somehow when our walk was done,
My shattered faith was whole again."

XII

CAN THE CHURCH SAVE THE WORLD?

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—Matthew 28. 19, 20.

THE actual task to which Christianity has been set will, when honestly faced, either drive discouragement into the heart, or compel a profound faith in God. This fact accounts for the extremes of religious manifestations attendant upon periods of great difficulty in the world's life. Folks are either driven to God for help in a condition they are not willing to surrender, but know is far beyond their own strength, or they abandon it in hopeless discouragement. The question I choose now to discuss has been on the lips of many these late days, as they have endeavored to make hard way through experiences no one can tolerate, and yet no one seems able to deliver from. Individuals have asked it, nations are asking it, society is asking it—Can the church with the old faith save the world? Steadfast gazing at such a world as we

find ourselves in now is quite enough to drive weak hearts to despair, and just what we mean by "weak" may need some careful measurements. War, desolation, sorrow, madness, suffering, poverty, starvation, pestilence, anarchy—all these many things, familiar on our news columns, are not the types of destroyers we expect to prey upon what we call weak hearts. These things bring heavy feet to trample strong hearts with. We need not wonder if the call for help has come from places where men have thought heretofore great confidence dwelt. Can there be any deliverance? Men's ears are keen today for every actual offer. "Who can deliver us from the body of this death?" Can the church save the world? Are these forces of religion rugged enough and powerful enough to lift ancient empires out of their desolation, and carve out effectual routes for reformation? We have grown used to the great smashing might of TNT. Can we safely place our hope in a gentle gospel? Have we any right to solicit men and women to make sacrifice to help us build churches in which to stand and preach the gospel, when there is great, gaunt hunger in the world, when desolation is spread over a continent, when unemployment is forcing its hardship upon millions, when many mills are idle, and when accumulated debts are crushing the hearts of people and nations? If we are to retrench in our financial situation,

and reduce our expenses to the last dollar of economical wisdom, why not begin with the church and let it languish until we have the prosperous times we all hope for some day? Is Christianity a luxury or a fundamental necessity?

Dean Inge, of Saint Paul's Cathedral, in London, has been called the "gloomy Dean." He preaches much in dark terms. He faces the difficult with full sense of its difficulty rather than with the compulsory optimism of a faith in omnipotence. He is a keen thinker, and in every way an outstanding character in the strength of the English church. In one of his recent addresses he contends that we have been in these late years passing through a degeneration which has come from the fact that the twentieth century has come, as an heir, into a great fortune which the nineteenth century laid up by hard work. It is difficult to merely inherit a fortune safely. Those who do not pay the price of value in possessing it, have no sense of value in administering it. This great, rich century of ours found itself rich when it came, and inherited with its riches all the dangers of the easy abuse of them. Now, after a deluge of desolation and expenditure, this so-called New Century, which has just turned its maturity and stands of age, having in its childhood and adolescence swept the full gamut of experience already,

finds itself in debt and in difficulty, the like of which no other age has ever known. The great nations that only yesterday held almost all the riches of the world are now crushed under an indebtedness no financier can fathom. Of this much I am sure, we are now as a world where we can grasp, and we are beginning to grasp, somewhat of the meaning of the great task which has been laid on the shoulders of the institution that dares set itself to the ideal of making out of this world a place where men and women, such as we are, can actually live in a manner that becometh our claim of brotherhood under our common fatherhood. The saving of this world from sin is no mere recreation; no task to be assumed on spare-time impulse. It is no work that can be done by legislation, no matter how well that legislation be drawn.

I was engaged once in delivering a series of religious addresses in a public hall. One evening I was waited upon by a committee that had been sent from some socialist society in the city asking me to bring my congregation and abandon my meeting, and let the people hear a real message, and, to quote their closing words, "We will show you how to do at once what Christianity has been unable to do in two thousand years." I did not adjourn my meeting, and it has been several years since the challenge, and I have seen but little change. The man who sets him-

self to cure the ills of this sin-struck world with a scheme which depends on the laws and institutions of men, has missed his way. Laws and institutions take their tone and temper from the men who make them. He who would right this world must first be equipped to right the sinful lives of men. You can conceive ideal institutions and laws, and construct complete new conditions of living, but when you put into those ideal conditions unideal men, the institutions will be shattered. Some one has said, "If you put a pig in a parlor, I know which will change first." It is little trouble if you are possessed of a fertile brain, to shut yourself in your study and dream out a complete new world. Some Bellamy or Plato, or any other Utopian dreamer, can, with an ideal humanity as his basis, construct a new world that will dazzle every eye. But when he opens his door and walks out upon the actual pavements of the world where men are just as they are, rather than as he drew them to be, his plan fails because it was conceived on a basis which does not exist. We are not seeking to conceive an ideal set of institutions. We are set at the practical task of constructing a godly humanity. Men make institutions. Institutions do not make men.

When as a Christian man, with the sense of my task upon me, I look about to see what yet

remains to be done, I am ashamed of our record. But when I compare the record of Christianity with what any other religion or philosophy has done, I confess to a comparative satisfaction at least. The nearer you think you have come to the horizon of our aims, the wider you will discover our prospects to be. The footprints of God are evident all along our ideals anyhow, even if in our own actions we may have badly marred their evidence. Old Bishop Colenso drew down the world's window blinds and bade men solemnly make ready the obsequies of Christianity. He had the burial service ready. But what he conceived to be the setting sun was not so at all, it was, rather, the dawn. The good Bishop seems to have been reversed in his observation. Some one said of Gilbert Chesterton, who always argues on the reverse side of every question, that if he was asked to describe a sunrise he would stand on his head and describe a sunset. I incline to believe Bishop Colenso mistook all the universe and its signs because he himself needed readjustment. His wail of the sunset of Christianity has died away in the constant increase of Christian institutions about the earth. Christianity has come on down the oft-menacing ages, and found everywhere and always the manifestation of her divine commission, until, as some one has said, "the little parochial millennium of the Jews has now become the universal ex-

pectation of the race, and the limited personal salvation of the individual has been enlarged into a vast design extending its dominion to every faculty and interest and prospect of our many-sided nature." There does not seem to be about us here now the atmosphere of a finished career. There is nothing about the world which seems to point to the fact that it is breaking down with age, nor that it has accomplished its purpose. I have not seen posted the notice for the meeting of the creditors of a bankrupt universe. Everything points the other way. We are swept with a perfect marvel of new ambitions. We are finding every day the evidences of new possibilities. Our brains reel at the mounting figures of the riches we are finding. New storehouses of power are being put within our reach. Never was mankind so very outstanding in vision and dream and passion as now. And amid this great awakening comes the appreciation of the new expectation of the world in the church. Once, and that not long gone either, the attitude of Christianity seemed to be that of endurance. The world grew used to the attitude of a religious interpretation which had its hope fixed only upon ultimate escape. Wrongs and oppressions and every evil thing, were met with that quenchless hope that one great, glad day we would make good an eternal deliverance. The new attitude of Christianity is that these

things were not meant to be endured. They have no rights on this earth. They are here only because of presumption. They must be resisted and overcome and driven out. Our deliverance needs not await an escape from an evil world. This world can be made a good world. The evil that is here needs not be, must not be, shall not be. At whatever cost it must be changed. What care we for cost, when we remember that the first chapter of our story is written in the blood of the Son of God? We have as a church only written our real history as we have gone forth regardless of all cost, and proceeded to make right the things that are evil. Our real churchly program has not been one of endurance but one of aggressive opposition and conquest. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was not poured out upon this world merely to make here and there the possibility of the escape of some few souls to righteousness. This is a redeemed world, and those who believe that are challenged to make it as speedily as possible a saved world. This is the fact compulsory that should make enthusiasts out of Christians everywhere. It should consume our lives with passionate devotion. I am sure it will do so whenever the actual truth of it bursts in full meaning upon the soul. Its objective is large enough to command.

A few years ago I lived in the northwest part of our country and so near the wilderness of the

big wood that the news of a lost man was not rare, though it never lost its power to command enthusiastic response. Men were ready to take great risk in search of a lost man. But the idea of a lost child in the woods almost overwhelms one who realizes how dark and dense and dangerous is the night in the actual wilds. Little Beulah Gonthorn, only two and one half years of age, wandered away from the door of her cabin home, and was swallowed up in the quiet of the forest. The stricken mother, after hunting with care all about the house, and in the near-by clearing, became frantic with fear and went calling down the trails into the woods, with no results. Calling loudly for help, her voice was heard, and ere evening fell with early darkness over the forest, several men and boys had been enlisted in the search. They eagerly searched the woods all night long. Every ear was set to hear the pitiful cries of a frightened baby in the darkness, but no one heard. That was Wednesday night. Thursday and Friday and Saturday, the news having traveled rapidly, every man and boy throughout the section had tramped and listened and looked, day and night, but no word came of any sign of the lost babe. All the stores of near villages were closed, and the people set themselves to find that little child. Sunday afternoon they brought some bloodhounds. Twice they followed a trail to an old

haystack in a little marsh ravine, but both times they lost the scent there. The searchers concentrated in that vicinity, and literally crawled over every foot of the ground about. The interest was intense. Wednesday and Wednesday night; Thursday and Thursday night; Friday and Friday night; Saturday and Saturday night; Sunday! and in the late afternoon in amazement a keen eye saw under a pile of underbrush that little baby girl, who had at last become too weak to attract attention. For over four days and nights, exposed to the wilds that would scare most any adult to sit alone through, that babe had kept alive by eating grass and the leaf-loam of the forest floor. She was one mass of scratches and bruises. Those eager, glad hunters now lifted the little weak body in their strong, triumphant arms and carried her home to her mother. I read the news of the recovery while on a flying train. It was wired to the world from Erskine, Minnesota. My soul was glad to read it, and tears of thankfulness were on the faces of all the people as we heard it. Thank God! Thank God! Thank God! I have said all that just to say more effectually that the passion of abandoned endeavor is the only logical conduct for Christianity.

I saw a tiny boy lost in a big crowd on the streets of Chicago one day. He was crying vigorously. Men were shouting at each other

and at the crowd. Suddenly a man came plunging through the crowd and grabbing that crying boy to his breast held him tight while he recovered his composure a bit. I was so glad I was standing near enough to hear the first word the little fellow said. Just as soon as he could choke down his fear, he jerked out in an effort at triumph, "I knew all the time you would find me." Thank God for the passion of men when once fired. What I long to see is the issue of Christianity made so convincing to men that they will catch the call of passionate devotion. We must confess to all too little of it now. So few of those who have named the Name seem to really catch the gleam of the great task. To cleanse this world from sin! What audacity for folks such as are we to attempt it!

I am an optimist with Jesus Christ. I am not afraid. Defeat is not a haunt to me. Jesus Christ is bound for the citadel of humanity. The task of our Lord is the world. You and I are vindicated in our profession of him only as we make evident a positive part in the performance of that task. Critics who are so eloquent in explanation of the failure of the church find all the significance of their criticism in the fact that the Christian program is so big the casual observer fails utterly to see what we have been able thus far to do, because of the vast work remaining to be done. We have actually come

far, let us not lose heart that we have yet far to go. I remember the first time I crossed the ocean. Every time I allowed my mind to think of the vast waste of the waters about and before me, all the progress of the little toiling ship seemed lost. The horizon forever seemed the same. The ocean was ahead. The world had been left behind. All standards of measurement I had come to reckon distance by were gone from my view. I could not feel sure we were making progress. I bent over the side of the ship to watch the flying spray, but when I looked out everything was the same. I was not sure whether the ship or the ocean moved. The captain posted every morning the tiny mark of the log and indicated on the chart where we were, but it seemed a huge guess. Every night the sun went down in the same place, and the same stars came out to twinkle through the rigging just where I had seen them before. I could hear the engines. I could feel the throb of the great grinding propellers. But somehow the ocean just seemed to swallow all sense of progress. It seemed supreme audacity when the captain told us we would see land at such an hour. I had had to change my watch so much I had lost confidence in it too.

That is exactly the situation before the man who measures the work of the Church of God on earth to-day. The vast sweep of our task reaches so far beyond what we have done as to

crush into insignificance the tiny reports we bring when we make bold enough to arrange our statistics. We read the log of our progress, and then turn our faces out toward the way yet to go, and almost lose courage. But I believe in God, and he posts the log of his kingdom. He has given us definite promises which bear upon the establishment of his kingdom on this earth. He has told us of the flowing of the nations to the mountain of the Lord's house; of the day when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; of the time when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

One day a critical and doubting man asked a missionary who had been telling of some of the great difficulties of the field in which he had been at work just what kind of prospects he really felt were before us for the salvation of the world. "As bright as the promises of God," was the fine instant reply of the worker. That is where I take my stand. Christianity is in the struggle. Her banner is unfurled. The sound of the bugle is in her ears. The tramp of the march is in her feet. She has laid conquest to the world. I believe profoundly the world will be saved. Not only do I believe that Christianity can save the world, but I believe that that very ability in such high importance, carries also compulsion that runs into the unavoidable con-

clusion that the world must therefore be saved. There is no alternative. If I did not believe that, my enthusiasm would die from my endeavor. I could not urge folks to join themselves to an institution that was on this earth overcome with too big a task. In a day such as this, when enthusiasm is everywhere stirred by great results, I could not call for interest in an institution that was merely "hanging on for dear life." I appreciate the fact that the church to-day, measured against the billion-faceted world, is a small handful. I know we need genuine heroism in the task. Would God that the preacher would arise who could strike the note that would thrill the ranks to-day with the full sense of our espousal—the note that would capture the latent heroism of our youth: young men and young women of ambition and capacity, those in whose hearts and minds already are forming the great dreams and the big thoughts of a greater to-morrow. There is nothing that will stir real blood, and fire genuine zeal, and call out all the superb activity of the very best you possibly can be like this tremendous conflict of Christianity in its siege of this world.

Allow me to close this meditation with a frank statement of my personal confidence in the triumph of our cause. The cross of Jesus Christ never has turned back, never will turn back. It is to-day increasingly the mightiest force on this

earth. Our Lord is still in militant conquest here. Not yet are all things under his feet, but we see evidences of his constant progress all about us. Sometimes the tramp of his march has been confused with tumbling walls and clashing armies and toppling thrones. Sometimes the dust of the conflict has obscured our vision. But through it all, and always out of it all, has emerged our great Master ever nearer victory. This world can be saved. It would be an immeasurable pity, therefore, if for any lack on our part it should not be saved. There may repose the key of a crisis in even the least of our lives. We dare not risk the liability of our own lack of interest now.

There was a note in the newspapers the finishing day of the great Panama Canal that I have been grateful for many times. It may have been missed by the multitude, but I hope it has been preserved in the records of our government. The day they prepared the final blast on the Pacific end of the great canal there was prepared a mighty group blast, whereby twenty tons of dynamite were to be exploded. The great charge was planted in five hundred and forty-one holes, thirty feet deep. When the electric spark was touched, literally hundreds of tons of mud and rock were hurled high in the air. The great gap, however, was not quite deep enough to open a sea level channel to low tide. An ordinary

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workman with a shovel opened a small trench. I wish I knew his name. I don't know that it was even recorded. That little hand-dug trench of an unknown workman soon became a fast running stream, and then a raging torrent four hundred feet wide, and the waters of the great eager ocean ran in and filled the excavation. The waters of the Pacific washed up against the solid masonry of the Miraflores Locks, and by evening the steam dredges were passing through the channel for the first time. If these words of mine reach any soul that has been disheartened at the great task before the church, I hope they may plant new confidence there. The church stands firm to-day. The glory of God is upon it. The nations of the world are gravitating certainly about the standard of the cross. It is established on the tops of the mountains and all the world is turning thither—

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all."

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